

Childhood Education

*The Magazine for Teachers of Young Children
To Stimulate Thinking Rather Than Advocate Fixed Practice*

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FRANCES MAYFARTH, *Editor*

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Next Month—

■ "Using the Tools of Learning" — reading, writing, and speaking—is the theme for the November issue.

If we make use of sensory experiences (October issue) to develop greater understanding of the world about us and learn to express this understanding more effectively through speaking and writing, is it reasonable to believe that we have here a basis for better human relationships?

It was with this belief in mind that the October and November issues were planned to complement each other. Contributors to the November issue will include: Howard A. Lane, "Child Development and the Three Rs"; Marcella Mason, "They Grow as They Write"; and Alice Miel, "Social Living and the Tools of Learning."

In addition there will be a description of a harvest festival by Grace Anna Fry and an article on "The How and Why of Non-oral Reading" by James E. McDade and Mary Gillies.

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Photograph by Chloes Bardeen, teacher of first grade, Milwaukee Public Schools

Something New In Sensory Experiences

"Open My Eyes"

THE HORSES that live in mines and the fish that live in caves lose their sight. The eye is not an organ that invariably "sees"; neither individually nor genetically can it retain this power, without appropriate stimulation. As with the lower animals, so with the highest: there is no physical, motor, mental or social ability secure enough in its factors of internal growth to guarantee proper maturation, come what may.

The human organism not only learns by doing, *it develops by doing*. A child bathed in the enriching milieu of the modern school is not the same animal as the over-verbalized, heavily-disciplined, tame creature who endured tedious hours, months and years of stay-in-your-seat schooling.

Sensory experience is just another name for life experience. It literally opens the child's eyes and ears to what is good and interesting in the world about him. It opens his mind, too, for he discovers that there is a place for logic, for knowledge, for the mental tools of language and thought.

Research workers are now reaching into the last great area in childhood education, the land of emotions: conflicts, frustrations and pathological outcomes on the one hand; but on the other, opportunities for happiness, friendliness and joy in normal social relationships. Thus in a school play it is truly one for all: the play must go on, and it must be good. Everything is shared; competition is no more than that between one's right and left hand.

IT IS IN the provision for such situations in music, dramatics, forensics, nature study, crafts, radio, and social service that the new school content offers its brightest hopes. The skills, habits and experiences, the feelings, attitudes and social living among school children should lead directly into adult practices and responsibilities. In 1939 it is the adult who is seized with grim and deadly delusions; it is the growing child, the adolescent, who must again find the path of individual and social virtue.

—George D. Stoddard

Initiative or Defeatism

NO matter how confirmed an optimist one may be, it is impossible to avoid meeting on all sides today a spirit of defeatism, an attitude of hopelessness, and this in a world in which man has developed materials and powers beyond even the dreams of a century ago, a world in which man has scratched only the surface of the possibilities of development.

Defeatism is preached and practiced and is temporarily disintegrating our civilization. Commencement orators say to young hopefuls, "We are sorry to be handing you such a mess of a world. We have made a bad job and only hope you will do better with it." Why apologize for advancements in science and industry that are only short of marvelous? Why apologize for problems industrial speed has caused? Why not look at the opportunities that exist on every side for service and extension of abilities? America is still the land of opportunity. Every problem itself presents an opportunity and a challenge to initiative, to intelligent aggressive attack.

Defeatism is easy. It is as contagious as disease. It requires no effort and the comforts of our industrial progress have made us soft. We have lost to a great degree the spirit that "hard work never killed a man." Idleness will; over-emotionalism will; but sensible steady work will not. Children, even kindergartners, thumb their way to school because "five blocks is too far to walk." High school and college students frequently demand passing grades after applying little effort to their studies. Children too often go to the movies because it amuses them, when a hobby would entertain, educate, and develop character to a greater degree. Too much money in the hands of children takes away the incentive to original creation while too little makes an excuse for idleness. One of the greatest values of manual activity is that, if correctly taught, it develops ability to see possibilities, provides for thinking through problems, and gives confidence through an acquired skill.

DEFEATISM in the face of the needs of the world today? As long as there are ideals, be they social, economic, scientific or industrial, there is an accompanying hope. This the teacher must ever feed. Social and spiritual problems present our greatest difficulties today, but their challenge demands the same qualities of character that mastered our material problems. If the ideal and the hope are harnessed to faith, intelligence, will-power, and perseverance there can be no room for defeatism.—D. E. W.

Firsthand Experiences

AND SENSORY LEARNING

Children have eyes and noses and fingers as well as ears—sensitive instruments for learning of which we need to make greater use. Miss Stanton is director of the Harriet Johnson Nursery School, New York City, and Miss Beyer is director of the nursery school at Sarah Lawrence College, Bronxville, N. Y.

• TEACHERS are so eager for children to learn, but too often so unimaginative about what is involved in the learning process, envisaging it primarily as an adult-proffered gift of words and ideas to be accepted by the child and molded into his being. If we could be a little less meticulous about presenting factual material and a little more alert in uncovering the potential learning material in everyday experiences, we would make better teachers of young children.

Most adults of this teaching generation are limited by having been brought up in a tradition of imparting information rather than in the giving of experiences. The method of teaching through words is not so much a conviction as it is a habit. Many modern teachers admit readily the power of direct experience to fix an idea or clarify thinking or sharpen an image. They acknowledge that these experiences, although not book-learned, have value in their own educative processes. To see Elsinore and to wander along its walls and in its dungeons is to make Hamlet live as a personality and not just as a broody book character. To spend the morning in the kitchen of a Guatemalan Indian is worth a set of books

on the domestic habits of the Quiché tribe. Similarly, for a young New York City child to see the Queen Mary docking constitutes a learning experience that is more vivid than any verbal description however erudite or scientifically or artistically valid. To learn that horses eat oats instead of chocolate cake and sleep in stalls instead of beds, through a visit to the stable, is a sharper way of teaching "horse facts" than words could ever be.

• *Experience Before Words*

We have become so learned that we have forgotten that in addition to ears, children have eyes and noses and fingers, and that these are sensitive instruments for learning. Education for even young children has become so concerned with the "whatness" of experience that the "howness" is frequently omitted altogether. We tend to describe physical phenomena in visual terms only. We say "a rabbit has long ears", when we might add so much more to our rabbit image by providing the opportunity for a use of other than the visual senses. First of all let us provide a live rabbit rather than a picture of one, then through questions stimulate an expression of sensory images: How does he feel? How does his nose move? How does he eat? Looking, feeling, listening are followed by vivid reactions to the direct experience of a live rabbit.

"He wiggles his nose, but not a snuffle sounds."

"He's soft, soft as baby feathers; he feels like fur puffing on my hand."

"His ears are slippery with hairs and pointy and pink inside, really pink!"

"He has wet eyes."

"He hops with his long, pushy legs."

Children who have had experience in such terms have really learned.

As adults we have become so accustomed to words that we forget that they are shapeless and meaningless to young children unless they have sensory images behind them. A group of kindergarten children were playing stable one day. They knew the word "hay", but when the stable owner went out to buy the hay, he asked the storekeeper for a "bottle of hay." Another kindergarten group had memorized the names of three flowers—rose, geranium and lily—but when these children, out for a walk, looked into a florist's window, the only flower they recognized was a rose.

Not only nursery school children but older children, as well, have similar confusions when words have preceded experience. A nature study teacher brought a chipmunk to a class of nine-year-old children. They called it a tiger. Their class teacher was very much surprised. She said they had seen pictures of tigers, but she did not realize that from the pictures they had received no sense of the animal's size.

A geography teacher asked a brilliant nine-year-old boy, "If you were riding horseback, could you cross a state boundary?" "Certainly", said the boy, "if the horse was a good jumper." What value have these empty words? We need to remember that a word is a symbol and if it has no image back of it, it does not function as a word.

Take the word, rain, for example. What does this word bring to your mind? Perhaps an outstanding and joyous teen-age experience when you walked through the countryside in the spring, getting wetter and wetter until finally you splashed deliberately through the brooks in your path. Or it reminds you of an unpleasant experi-

ence of being caught in a storm in the city just when it was time to go home. Rain brings memories of sounds with it, too—the steady drumming of the rain drops on a roof, the murmur of swollen rivulets through a grassy meadow.

But what does rain mean to a tiny child? He stands at the window and is told, "You can't go out today. It's pouring." One of our nursery school mothers told me of her two-year-old's surprise when, in the pouring rain, she was dressed in a raincoat, hat and rubbers and taken down to the front door to go out. She seemed really frightened. The sidewalks are dark, not light, when it rains. She ventured out cautiously, placing her foot carefully on the black pavement. When her first step into a puddle threw drops of water into the air, she was startled. For a twenty-four-month-old child this walk to school, two blocks away, was filled with excitement and learning.

Miss Madeleine Dixon in her book, *High, Wide and Deep*, gives a delightful description of children enjoying a summer rain:

We do not hurry them in from a shower. It was interesting early in the summer to see their troubled faces the moment a drop of rain would fall. What have we done to little hothouse children of today that they have not experienced rain on their bodies?

"Rain!" someone would shout, ready to dash to shelter, even though sun suits were used to getting wet in the lake.

"Yes, a warm rain," I would reassure, "feel it on your head—feel it on your arms—feel it on your feet." And they like it—they like it very much.

"I put my head back and it comes in my face. I open my mouth and it comes in," little Rachel says, and they all try letting rain come in their mouths.

If it is a sharp rain, or a thunder storm, or there is high dangerous wind, we do scurry in. But we watch for the sun to come out when it stops. Then off with shoes and stockings and a run through the wet grass, earth-warmed by a baking July sun. In your most vivid imagination you could create nothing to compare with warm cut lawns sprinkled with fresh rain for

bare feet to twinkle over. From children you get an unwitting dance of joy every time.¹

After joyous experiences with snow on the roof playground, the five-year-olds bring "pieces" of snow down into the warm classroom. It is very difficult for a five-year-old to believe that snow melts into water. So each child holds a wee bit of snow in one palm and watches the process. How different this is from having the teacher tell about it or having the teacher hold the snow. Not only does the child see the change slowly taking place, but he experiences the cold in his own hand.

• *Experiences with Sounds and Smells*

The little child's day should be full of firsthand experiences. There should be materials to manipulate. We forget that children have to learn form, size, texture, through touching, looking, comparing. They have to learn all kinds of sounds. Have you ever thought what it would be like to live in a world where you didn't recognize sounds? At night when you hear a noise you can't identify, are you not immediately uneasy? I remember visiting in a home where a two-year-old asked, "Whazzat?" "Whazzat?" after every sound. A slamming door especially alarmed her, so I tried holding her in my arms and closing the door gently, then doing it several times by pushing it, then letting her do it.

Our children love a listening game when the teacher makes many noises—clapping hands, whistling, tapping the radiator with a hammer or a piece of wood, turning on the water—or a game when they listen to noises outside the building—trucks passing by, an auto horn, a siren, people talking, a steam roller.

Once, while teaching in the Euthenics School at Vassar, our classroom was filled with the smell of gasoline. The little noses sniffed vigorously. "What can that be?" I asked. A child said, "Gasoline." "But why

should we smell gasoline?" Someone answered, "Maybe one of the cars outside hasn't any gas and they had to buy some." We sent one child to investigate and sure enough a man was pouring gasoline through a funnel into his tank. He obligingly told us of his troubles in getting it. Great impetus, of course, was given to our automobile and gas station play by this incident.

The joy of "bacon day" is first sensed through sensitive little noses and dinner is looked forward to eagerly. When the street outside our school was paved one fall, the smell of tar and asphalt was almost as delightful as the sound of the steam roller.

• *Sharpening the Teachers' Senses*

Don't we as grown-ups often go through the world blind? I know a student teacher—a college graduate—who came to school for several weeks over a wooden street flooring. A new subway was in the process of construction under the street; pipes, wires, and litter of all kinds were strewn about. Asked in class to describe the neighborhood, the student said that it was obviously a very run-down one for she could hardly get across the streets. She had never realized the work that was being done below the street level.

Another equally amazing incident was told me by a friend who spends weekends out of town. Arriving at the station one Monday morning, she stopped to admire an electric engine. Whereupon an acquaintance, walking down the platform with her, said, "Why, I have never noticed before that the engines here are electric ones. I want to look at it, too."

Obviously, as teachers, we ourselves must learn once more to live more keenly with our senses—to see the painters at work near the school, the milk-wagon horse at the corner; to see in the newspaper, items of interest that will make the

¹ Dixon, Madeleine C. *High, Wide and Deep*. New York: The John Day Company, 1938, p. 71.

children's program more vivid—for a first grade studying boats, a story of an ocean liner being dragged off a sand bar by ten tugs; for a second grade studying aeroplanes, a story of a village marooned by snow with food dropped to them from aeroplanes.

Adults neglect providing firsthand experiences which children may absorb through sensory channels, not because they are unaware of the values of such learning, but because they themselves have become dulled by too much living with short-cuts. They are so accustomed to communicating ideas and facts without bright images. Our observation has become as pedestrian as our language.

Children are still fresh and close to feel-

ings and experiences. Their senses are not dulled, but are sharp and keenly perceptive. As teachers, we should be challenged to stimulate and preserve this clarity by providing rich and varied opportunities for learning through direct and vivid experiences. We need to brighten our own language with fresh images. We need to listen more sharply, and refurbish our dulled adult sensory equipment with the clarity of young children's images. We need, first, to become aware ourselves of the learning opportunities in direct experience, and then to provide for expression of these experiences in play and language that is not utilitarian but vivid and shining as the clear eyes of childhood—these are the responsibilities of teachers of young children today.

By ELLEN M. OLSON

Nature Experiences

AND SENSORY LEARNING

Seeing is not enough—one must feel and taste and smell and hear, to understand. Miss Olson of the kindergarten-primary department of the Chicago Teachers College describes how nature experiences may contribute to this understanding.

• IN ATTEMPTING to understand why one adult appreciates the world of nature so deeply and another so casually, or not at all, it may be worthwhile to go back to the early backgrounds of sensory experiences when present-day impressions were being formed. For one, the experience of walking through a stretch of oak woods in the late fall may mean the shortest route to a given point,

while for another it is the synthesis of a hundred joyous experiences in these woods—now shuffling through for the muffled sound of damp leaves and the crackling of crisp top layers; now recalling the cooling green of oak leaf hats on a drowsy summer day. Indeed, the individual is enveloped with a fusion of rich experiences, brought to mind by the simple act of walking through dry leaves.

• *In Woods and Fields*

Sensory experiences undoubtedly add to the depth of appreciation and breadth of learning situations as well as to growth in understanding. The woods and fields teem with life seen differently by each individual because of the variety of individ-

ual backgrounds and personal environments. Experiences with flowers bring a wide variety of reactions. The cool, clean feel of violets as well as their color provides a lasting impression. Then add that delicate outdoor fragrance and one has a product that makes the commercial perfume a taunt and a sacrilege. The inexpressibly dainty fragrance of a wild rose, the pungence of burgemot and catnip, the barn smell associated with certain field daisies and the dripping freshness of pond lilies are examples of smells evolved through building a series of interesting impressions.

For a child, the experience need not necessarily be a rapturous or a beautiful one. The taste of a dandelion stem as it curls in the mouth, the slippery feel of spider-wort when picked, the stale bitterness of burdock—these do not deter a child from experimenting with their feels and smells.

After a few contacts, more and more experiences are added in an ever-widening circle of appreciation. Bare knees in a bed of cool, velvety moss, palms down, cheek feeling the texture—an unforgettable acquaintance with moss; encircling a birch tree with both arms, smoothing the grain of cherry bark, trying fingers in the rough grooves of the poplar make for a useful acquaintance with trees. Tasting sorrel, clover, nasturtium or watercress supplies infinite satisfaction.

A fist full of juicy shoots of white field clover cherished, arranged and used as table decoration with such unobtrusive approval as, "Clover is up early this year", can establish unforgettable sensory impressions of these early greens. Dandelions and clover belong to children everywhere. Every home and schoolroom needs extra flower receptacles in dandelion season. In the field, in the park, on the lot or along a wall children still stop to pick clover and to make pearl-strung necklaces.

• *At Home, at School*

The most enjoyable sensory experiences are not all reserved for children who have access to the woods and fields. Most children know the feel of rain-made pools, damp sand, clay or oozy mud squeezed through fingers and toes—experiences that cause the unappreciative adult to wince. Rain on roofs, on window panes, on oil-skin protectors or on old clothes is usually a joyous experience. Why is it that some individuals have these delicious experiences and others never do? Watch one mother running with her baby for cover during an April shower and another opening a colorful umbrella with keen enjoyment. The smiles on the rain-spattered faces of the latter two assure one that a long list of pleasurable impressions are being started for that child. Perhaps it takes only a little enthusiasm or approval to start the endless chain of associations that build toward active learning.

In planning school experiences for children, it is well to consider the myriad associations comprising thought processes. We need to be thoroughly aware that by providing learning situations involving much firsthand experience, we build toward an ever-widening and deepening range of understanding. We need to be conscious of the fact that the child is daily "rubbing elbows" with a world full of sensory experiences and it is our obligation to make these experiences meaningful.

At Hallowe'en, for instance, the teacher is confronted with such significant but disconcerting questions as, "Shall I permit the children to watch me prepare a jack-o-lantern?" or, "Shall I go through the ordeal of having each child pull out some pumpkin seeds and fiber with the consequent mess and a room full of sticky hands?" There are such factors to consider as time, space, tidiness, facilities for washing hands, it is true, but for actual learning there is only one choice to make.

One cannot understand, by looking on, the smell, the texture, the slippery feel of fiber and seeds, the outside smoothness that makes up a pumpkin.

In planning Christmas decorations it is entirely as important to experience the feel and fragrance of spruce or balsam as to see the finished decoration. Since bundles of evergreen boughs are available in most city markets, it may be more important to plan an excuse for handling a branch of greens than to have a room or school tree. A twig for each child assures for him the feel of taut needles and the aromatic fragrance of the stems, plus the taste, perhaps, of a few stray needles.

The learning emerging as a by-product of play with seeds is gratifying. Every young child experiments with blowing dandelion or milkweed fluff, making bowls and baskets of burdock burrs, or pulling tufts of grass seed through his teeth. It is always such a thrilling revelation to discover a little later that seeds have been disseminated in this manner. Seeds made familiar and interesting through pleasurable childhood association may include experiences with those that grow in cones—flattened, elongated, tiny, light, heavy; in dried pods from the honey locust with their intriguing sounds; horse chestnuts—smooth, rounded, colorful and choice; and the ever welcome acorns.

One who has a perceptual background made rich through interesting contacts with nature has a heritage of lasting beauty and appreciation. For him, the sun-warmed fragrance of pine woods permeates the innermost recesses of his soul. Firsthand knowledge of the combined spice of cedar, balsam, tamarack, and spruce distills an unforgettable essence. And imagine the flavor of wild strawberry to such an individual, or perfumed wild blackberry and raspberry! No less interesting, perhaps, is the tang of puckery sand cherry or the medicinal touch of juniper,

retrieved after a struggle with prickly needles. The feel of fresh wood shavings and sawdust, wet sea shells, sand and gravel, papery beech leaves or glossy poplar, toadstools, lichen or the stem of maiden-hair fern—all are experienced according to individual receptiveness.

• *At Lake and Marsh*

The shores of a northern lake offer thrilling activities. There are dams to build, sand and gravel to pile, and pebbles to gather, feel, and sort. Snail and clam shells, feathers of gulls and terns are an ever-present incentive for interesting collections. A shadow on the sand means gulls overhead, perhaps. An interruption in the digging, and we see the graceful, powerful, rhythmic flight of herring gulls, punctuated by a sudden dive into the water on a sure quest for fish. The terns are more discriminating. They scour the shore up and down, mile upon mile, for tidbits. Occasionally swallows, more dainty in flight, dip and soar overhead.

But the sand is our present interest. When tired of building and digging, we may want to follow some interesting tracks. A crayfish, perhaps, has gone by, or snails, or tracing his finer lines, a beetle. But here! Follow these prints and we find which way sandpipers or killdeer run. These things cannot be viewed distantly to be observed faithfully. One must be close to the thing itself—its feel and smell and sound—to have it register.

An excursion into a boggy marsh holds boundless surprise at every turn. A very brief excursion finds us beside a pitcher plant, that carnivorous species designed to catch and digest insects. Careful exploring of its interior discloses firm hairs bent inward to imprison the insect who attempts to drink at the bottom of the pitcher. Instead of hopping upon tickly meadow grasses, here we walk over a solid bed of breath-taking mosses, exquisite in design

and prolific in variety. We may find wild cranberry, too, a beautiful trailing vine with its delicate, infinitesimal leaves and handsome pink blossoms. Here we come to a whole bed of snowberry sending delicate vines over the moist moss. Sun dew in beautiful designs embroiders each tiny scallop of land adjoining the softer ooze. It is easy to see how the idea of commercial terraria became popular.

Here we come upon one of the most dazzling sights imaginable—a clump of priceless, pink, showy lady-slippers. One must get down beside this growing bouquet and appraise it from all angles for full appreciation of its beauty. Firsthand acquaintance eliminates all worry concerning the picking and consequent extinction of such rare species. Appreciation of the beauty of this plant will help eliminate the vandalism of ruthless pulling. No arrangement of lady slippers, however artistically planned for household decoration, could equal the beauty of these gems in their natural setting of tamarack, cedar, and spruce.

Suddenly we are startled from our rapt contemplation by a soft, paddling sound in the oozy part of the marsh where a muskrat is trailing proudly through with her young. Because we are patient on-lookers, she moves on undisturbed. Now above us, a swoop of great wings, and a belted kingfisher has retrieved a frog. And what a view of him as he swings on a piece of vine! At first glimpse one is struck with his handsome coloring and the power expressed in his deft fishing. This dignified and sturdy angler with the pompadour crest inspires a cordial respect. What surer

introductions could one have for building interest in the natural sciences?

• *For Now and Ever*

By bringing the world of nature closer to the child, we give meaning to a situation by adding a background of understanding. The cumulative effect of past experience is the essence of present understanding. If the materials for thinking are to be collected early in a child's development, we must provide opportunities for this background of sensory experiences. Only as we use the mind does the thinking process develop. We need a wealth of experience, or material with which to think, in order to have a wealth of ideas.

There are also such remote future needs as building up cultural resources for adult life. For a child who has had an introduction to the myriad challenges of the outdoors, there is little need for concern about the use of leisure time. How could any second-rate movie ever take the place of an excursion to the woods and fields, particularly so if that jaunt is teaming with live interest?

Fortunately for us, children add daily to their own list of sensory experiences without guidance by school or home. And if we were to total the countless opportunities for meaningful contacts missed each day in programs planned by parents and teachers, we should be astounded at the lack of understanding. The most gifted writer may not be able to convey his exact reactions to a clump of sweet briar, but even without a wide range of vocabulary, anyone can enjoy, and the littlest child can drink deeply of wild rose fragrance.



THE true American spirit—"Americanism"—is expressed in a determined and magnificent human struggle to achieve Democracy, Justice, and Liberty.—*American Legion*

Children and THE COMICS

Why do children like the funnies and how may adults use this interest as a basis for building more constructive and satisfying experiences? Miss Milton is an editorial writer with the Board of Christian Education of the Methodist Church, Nashville, Tenn.

• IN MANY schools the teachers know the speed and comprehension of each child in reading as measured by certain standardized tests, his defects in eye movements as ascertained by complicated mechanical devices, and the number of readers which he has read within the current year—usually books read by the child, let it be noted, not from choice but from more or less gentle compulsion!

In a smaller number of schools the teachers encourage the children to choose and read books from home and school libraries in harmony with their own interests, and then the teachers live in such close touch with the children that they know what books each child reads and can share with him his reading enthusiasms and questionings. This latter type of teaching is approaching a high art. But where, oh where are the teachers whose guidance extends beyond the genteel, generally approved books and magazines to that literary diet upon which American children feed most widely and regularly, that well-nigh universal, voluntary reading material of children in the United States—the comics, or the "funnies" as they call them?

• *Children's Experiences with Funnies*

Casual observation, as well as systematic research, reveals children of all ages clam-

oring—yes, and often fighting—for the funny papers. They read the funnies at home, on the streets, on subways and street cars, on the playground, in libraries, and in the schoolroom if they have an opportunity. Funny papers are passed from child to child, being, in fact, the chief item of exchange in many children's groups. Characters and incidents from the comics figure largely in the conversation and free play of children. This condition seems not at all strange when one considers that not only do most newspapers feature the funnies, but children are exposed to them constantly in adult conversation, in radio programs, and in book form at the stores that handle inexpensive books.

Of fifty-one children in a remote rural school, only one child—a six-year-old boy—reported that he did not read the funnies or have them read to him; while all children in the elementary grades of a town school reported that they read the comics frequently. Of two hundred seventy-one children from whom special individual records were secured, only twelve said that they did not like the funnies. The grade distribution of these children was from grade one through grade seven. Both boys and girls were included. The age range was from six to fifteen years.

Apparently, individual tastes affect the reading of comics as of other materials; but the striking facts are that more than ninety-nine percent of the children examined read the funnies frequently, even those children who lived in a secluded rural community, and more than ninety-five percent of the children liked them. Seventy-four different funnies were reported by these children as being espe-

cially enjoyed, the number per child ranging from one to twenty-six.

• *Children's Preferences*

Among the two hundred seventy-one children from whom individual records of preferences were secured there was a striking similarity between favorites of younger and older children, and of rural and town children. The five comics that ranked highest with the entire group—"The Katzenjammer Kids," "Dixie Dugan," "Tim Tyler's Luck," "Tarzan," and "Peter Rabbit"—were included in the first seven in grades one through three, within the first seven in grades four through seven, and within the first five in the town school. In addition, there were five other comics that appeared within the first fourteen in each of these lists—"Joe Palooka," "Dan Dunn," "Tillie the Toiler," "The Gumps," and "Little Annie Rooney." Since seventy-four different funnies were mentioned as favorites, the fact that the same ten were included within the first fourteen in all five groups seems remarkable. In the first three grades, "Peter Rabbit," "Tarzan," "Tim Tyler's Luck," and "The Katzenjammer Kids" ranked high above all other comics in popularity. These funnies center around the experiences of animals and children.

Preferences of boys and girls in the same age groups show decided similarity, although some sex differences are evident. Certain stories featuring girl heroines which do not appeal to the boys are popular with the girls. Similarly, certain stories about boys and men have a much greater appeal to boys than to girls. There are exceptions, however, for "Dixie Dugan" and "Tim Tyler's Luck" were favorites of both boys and girls in the groups studied.

Town children seem to have a greater interest in crime and mystery comics than do rural children.

Children do not always object to char-

acters who are exceedingly good, for Little Annie Rooney, who is a paragon of virtue, was a favorite with the children studied, although Little Orphan Annie was not popular.

Comic strip characters that are extensively popularized commercially in connection with products for children are not necessarily accepted by children in their funnies. For example, neither Mickey Mouse nor Popeye was popular with the children studied although their comic strips were available.

Funny paper characters must become real personalities to children, for the children seldom confuse names even when they are very similar.

• *Why Children Like the Funnies*

The two outstanding reasons given by children for liking the comics are that they are funny and that they are interesting and exciting. Apparently, children want something to make them laugh and something to give them a thrill. Perhaps as some psychologists suggest, present-day children need to escape from the humdrum of daily routine where everything is scheduled and predictable, and find more real adventure than this sophisticated civilization is giving them. It is entirely possible that this thirst for the humorous and the exciting is symptomatic of a genuine need which most materials and activities of home, school, and church are not meeting. More investigation is needed here.

Certainly, there are many specific conditions in modern society which definitely stimulate interest in the comics. First, there is the abundance of the comics. Many homes lack books for children, but homes without newspapers are much less common; and nearly always children from these latter homes can borrow funny papers from their companions. A public library may have few children's books, but the newspapers are always there.

Then, there is the regularity of the comics. Every day, or at least every week, there is a new supply. Children can keep up with the experiences of the characters day after day, week after week, with material that is ever fresh and new. In contrast with this, many schools and homes have no books for children except a few readers. In one city with a population of almost two hundred thousand only fifty dollars was appropriated last year for buying children's books for the public library. In many communities where home, school, and public libraries contain a large supply of choice books for children parents, teachers, and librarians hold so tenaciously to their genteel standards of what constitutes good literature that many children, in revolt, turn to the comics for stories with the virility and punch which they desire.

Another attraction of comics lies in their simplicity and pictorial quality. Even poor readers can read the brief comments in most comics and can supplement their grasp of the words by reading the pictures. Moreover, in the rushed and crowded living of many children there is little time for reading for pleasure; therefore, the fact that funnies can be read quickly is an added recommendation for them. The pictures may be crude and often ugly, but they represent the kind of art (?) with which children are constantly fed in animated cartoons and movies.

Of great significance in the reading of funnies is the social element. It seems unquestionable that young children want the funnies read to them not because they understand them or are vitally interested in them, but because they like the attention, the satisfying coziness of mother's or daddy's lap, and the soft music of the voice of one beloved. Radio leaders capitalized on the power of this sense of companionship when they arranged for Uncle Don to read the funnies in an informal, personal manner every afternoon.

Older children carry funny papers around with them and share them with their friends. Even when this is not done, a child gets a feeling of belongingness from the realization that he has read what all the other children and many grown-ups have read. One may refer to Bartholomew Cubbins, or Heidi, or Winnie the Pooh and not be understood by everyone; but in what American crowd would a reference to Popeye, or Mickey Mouse, or Tarzan fail to bring forth unanimous understanding? Yes, the comics introduce children to the most widely known characters from the printed page, and to a great variety of life experiences.

• *What May Interested Adults Do About Children's Reading of the Comics?*

1. *All adults who have contacts with children may change their attitude of wholesale condemnation or laissez faire acceptance to a genuine study of the comics and of children's experiences with them.*

It is interesting how ready adults are to condemn funnies as trash or as vicious material, or to turn off the matter with a shrug and the laughing comment, "Oh, I like them!" without ever having examined them intelligently. Parents and teachers need to read the funnies not in a desultory fashion, but regularly day after day with alert, critical minds. The purpose of this reading would be two-fold: first, to discover for themselves the strong and weak points of the comics, and second, to put themselves on speaking terms with the children as far as the children's most common reading experiences are concerned. A group of parents and teachers might well initiate such a reading program and compare their experiences at regular intervals.

After these interested adults have made themselves reasonably literate in the field of the comics, they will be ready to begin to study the experiences of children with the funnies. Reference was made to indi-

vidual records of preferences of two hundred seventy-one children for the comics and to informal observation of the experiences of many other children. This is a mere scratch on the surface. Records should be secured through observation, interviews, and questionnaires from thousands of children in all sections of the country and in various types of situations. In addition, controlled experiments could be set up to study the responses of children when they are exposed gradually to reading materials of a slightly higher quality. Some of the questions to which answers might be sought are:

(a) What are the outstanding features and significant trends in current comics?

(b) To what extent do children read or listen to the funnies? Do they like them? If so, which do they like best?

(c) What interest factors are there in funnies which make them appeal to children? What other factors in modern American life foster the habit of reading the comics?

(d) What experiences are children having through and with the funnies? What are the effects of these experiences on the children as individuals and as groups?

(e) How may teachers, parents, and other interested adults so guide children's experiences with the comics and other reading materials that the children's tastes in reading may be lifted to a higher level and their living be made increasingly rich, zestful, and worthy?

(f) How may adults and children so influence the production and dissemination of comics and other reading materials that they may more effectively meet the needs of boys and girls, as well as of adults?

If teachers, parents, and librarians expect to continue to spend an enormous amount of time on so-called reading programs, it seems only sensible that they should learn as much as possible about

children's experiences with those materials which are most commonly read by them.

2. *All persons who deal with the reading experiences of children may recognize that literature cannot be measured by external standards, since ideas expressed in words become literature only when they enter creatively into the experience of a person; therefore, literature cannot be considered apart from the needs of individuals, and what is literature for one child may not be literature for another.*

As leading psychologists and educators today express it, an individual learns only what he accepts to act upon. Since all individuals are different and have different experiences, the reading materials which fit vitally into the life of one child will not fit vitally into the life of another; therefore, what one child accepts and makes a part of himself another child will either reject entirely or accept superficially—that is, merely as words. If a child gets from "The Katzenjammer Kids" an experience which extends his horizons and deepens his sensitivity to life while *East o' the Sun and West o' the Moon* calls forth no responsive chord in him, for him "The Katzenjammer Kids" is literature while the other is not literature even though "The Katzenjammer Kids" may be of extremely low quality when measured by external standards. One of the greatest educational needs today is for teachers, parents, and librarians to get away from their lists of approved books for all children of a given age or reading ability to a recognition that reading tastes are and must always be different, and no printed words are literature for any child unless they become a creative element in his living.

3. *Teachers, parents, and librarians may begin their guidance of children's reading with the children's own interests and reading habits. This will inevitably involve a recognition of the comics and of the needs which they represent.*

The encouraging thing about children's tastes in reading is that they need not remain on the same level. A child who now devours all the funnies indiscriminately may be helped to recognize that in certain comic strips the characters are not true to life, the plot is always the same, and most of the action is really stupid, while other comic strips contain much that is genuinely interesting and funny. Thus little by little a child's tastes in comics may be improved.

At the same time the child's reading may be extended gradually to books that give some of the same satisfactions as those secured from the funnies, but on an increasingly higher level. For example, *Johnny Crow's Garden*, by Leslie Brooke, the Babar books, by de Brunhoff, *And To Think That I Saw It On Mulberry Street*, by Dr. Seuss, and *The Three Policemen*, by du Bois, with their humor, adventure, and mystery told chiefly in pictures, may carry a child from the comics into a new type of literature without too decided a jar. The important thing is that the teacher, parent, or librarian take the child where he is in his reading experiences and guide him gradually to something richer and better, not try to jerk him instantly from "Tarzan" to *The Wind in the Willows*.

4. *All adults who are interested in the welfare of children may see that they have access to many good, interesting books of various types—not just readers, and not just books of the highest literary quality although there should be many of these.*

Almost everyone reads a certain amount of worthless material during his lifetime and is not wrecked thereby. The significant thing to be concerned about in connection with a child's reading of the funnies is not that his chief reading interest now centers in comics, but that this interest shall not become a permanent, absorbing thing which sets his reading tastes for

life. One of the best ways to prevent this catastrophe is to see that the child comes into continual contact with other and better types of reading material. Instead of becoming distraught over a child's reading of the funnies and condemning them before the child, a teacher or parent may well use that energy in surrounding the child with good, interesting books of various types and then in enjoying some of these books with him.

5. *Adults may so arrange, or unarrange, children's days that the children can have abundant, uninterrupted time to read materials of their own choosing.*

Leisure time for children—that is, time when children may choose their own activities without overwhelming pressure or enticement from without—is rapidly disappearing. School, church activities, music lessons, dancing lessons, playground periods, club meetings, movies, auto trips, and other activities are filling their days to overflowing. If adults wish children to read books, they must see to it that the schedule of children's days is made less hectic.

6. *After a careful study of comics and of children's needs teachers, parents, librarians, and other interested adults may strive to have removed from the comics certain features whose effects on children are harmful.*

Unquestionably, the comics need to be improved, but it should be remembered that action toward improvement will be of doubtful value unless it is based on a real understanding of the problem; moreover, any action of this kind can avail little unless it is accompanied by constructive efforts to make a variety of reading materials easily accessible to children and to guide children wisely in their adventures in literature.

When the Children

HELP MAKE THE SCHOOL

A stimulating account of how a teacher and her children, with the help of parents, faculty, students, and community, set up their school and made their curriculum. Miss Fox is an instructor at Teachers College, Columbia University, New York City.

• IN OUR earnest zeal for the growth of social intelligence and for the preservation of democracy itself, those of us concerned with education are seeking to provide more and more opportunities for boys and girls to participate in planning, an inherent and invaluable part of any educationally complete act. What educational planning there has been these many years—as well as testing and evaluating—has been carried on primarily by state boards or school administrators or curriculum experts or, in rarer cases, by individual teachers, with never so much as a suggestion from the children themselves for whom the planning was chiefly concerned. Consequently, we have deprived children of rich educational experiences, and the society of which their schools are a part, of the maximum potential contribution of its youth.

But helping to make the curriculum is coming more and more to be a vital part of the curriculum itself. The implications flowing out of this concept affect every part and reach of the school. For just how significant such help can become varies widely with teachers and schools and communities, and the social and educational

orientation of the groups of which they are composed.

It is because of a faith in the importance of cooperative curriculum making and a growing conviction that teachers should record their experiences and experiments and share them for whatever they may be worth to others, that this article was written.

• *Preliminary Planning*

Three years ago an invitation came from my home state to teach in the summer demonstration school at the Utah State Agricultural College at Logan. I accepted with enthusiasm—first, because to work with people whom I already knew and loved was a prospect I cherished; and secondly, because to work with them in terms of the educational philosophy I then held most vital was a further opportunity to test its merits.

Since the organization was left largely up to me, I asked for an ungraded school, a sort of rural one-room set-up with approximately twenty-five children from about seven to twelve years of age—children with different interests and abilities. And the larger the room that could be found for us, I inserted into my suggestions—regardless almost of what kind—the better. (I had never yet taught in a room really large enough).

Then came the hours of thinking and planning that must precede such a venture. What could a group of twenty-five youngsters and me, some of us well acquainted with each other and the college,

and some of us—children of incoming students, perhaps, new to Logan and all that it offers, do together in a period of six short weeks that would be of most value and enrichment? This I pondered and this I planned, consulting my fellow teachers (I was teaching at Bronxville, New York, at the time) until I had explored many more possibilities than I knew we would use when the children's planning was added to mine.

My requisition I sent in accordingly—a rather minimal one—and asked for the privilege of adding to it as the summer developed and particular needs arose. It was my hope that much of the suggestion and preparation for our summer together could be worked out *with* the children. Time would be a limiting factor, to be sure, but what more valuable use of a significant part of that time, in and for a democratic society, than the careful selection, thinking through, and planning ways in which to utilize our unique opportunities most fruitfully?

That the participation of the children was to take the extreme and unprecedented form (unprecedented for me, at least), that it actually did during my first few days at Logan, I certainly could not have foretold. I have since been grateful to the oversight or misunderstanding of the person to whom my request was sent, for when I arrived on the campus the morning before school was to begin, nothing was in readiness. The children were registered for the following morning. A room had been arranged for—a great rambling mechanical-drawing room in the basement of the engineering building. But the furniture and equipment I had requested had not been brought up from the college elementary school building some five or six blocks down the hill, nor had the room itself been emptied of the rows of high tables and stools that the engineering students had used during the year, to say nothing, of

course, of the absence of materials and books I had requisitioned.

I was disturbed, to say the least, and so was the supervisor of training. So, also, was the professor of education who was in charge of arrangements. Rather desperately we three drove to the elementary building to see what we could speedily carry up as a make-shift for the morrow. We were sitting in the fifth grade room trying to think out just what of the room's equipment we would need when the idea dawned upon us that this was what the children should be, and could be, helping to decide. Under other circumstances, since the summer school period was so brief, such a procedure as we then considered probably would have been out of the question. But things were not ready, and they had to be made ready, and certainly the children would be on hand anyway before everything was in order. Why not let *them* profit by the experience of planning and setting up a school, an experience so often taken care of as routine by those who really don't need it?

So, we decided, we would let them start from scratch. The responsibility would be the children's as well as ours. And so it was, just that!

• *We Make Our Curriculum*

Next morning twenty-some children—tall, short, old, young, retiring, aggressive—many of them my old friends and students, all of them eager and expectant, met together in the nice big basement room. Some chairs had been brought up, a movable blackboard, and a piece of chalk. That was our equipment for the morning, except, of course, that the tall stools already there were much more exciting than the little chairs and were straightway swept into use. I explained to the children why the room looked as it did and why it was decided to let them have so important a part in planning, equip-

ping, and setting up their own school. They liked the idea; suggestions came fast.

The first thing we decided was that at least a dozen of the tall tables (the drawers of which we could use for lockers) and as many stools would be left in the room. We would want a work-bench, of course, and there was a nice "quiet" corner for that, and probably two or three long tables of different heights. We loved the big room chiefly because it was big, because it had high pillars and nooks and corners, because it was cool and light, because it had such a clean, hard composition floor, and, on the part of some of the children, because it was noisy. Every word spoken, every scrape of a chair, echoed with thrilling importance over the room.

It would take too much space to mention all the things we planned, not only that first day but far into the summer, and to tell of the lively discussions that went into such planning. Probably a few pertinent quotations from the list we later made of the people who had helped us and to many of whom we wrote letters of thanks will tell what we did:

Mr. Cole: Gave us lumber from his lumber yard.

Mr. Jenkins (the custodian): Lent us mop, broom, and clean-up materials for washing tables and floor. Showed us how to open windows. Fixed the lights so that Ferron could use the electricity for making his radio. Showed us how he used the suction-cleaner. Showed us the concrete-testing machine, the blueprint room, the furnace-room and tunnel.

Stanford: Brought two books and the daily newspaper.

Miss Bowen: Lent us books, tables, chairs, and clay from the Whittier school. Went with us to North Logan to see about borrowing a car. Helped at our parties.

Mrs. Daines and Patty: Hauled books.

Mr. Adams: Helped load things on the truck.

Mr. Keller: Drove the college truck for us.

Miss Fogleberg: Lent us typewriters.

Dee, Willard, and Miss Fox: Hauled wagon-load of equipment from the Whittier school.

Miss Smith: Lent us her victrola.

Dr. Stanford: Gave us two pairs of white mice.

Librarians: Let us use the Anne Carroll Moore Library twice a week. Showed us how to use the card index. Lent us three typewriting manuals.

Dr. Linford: Gave us money to buy things from the bookstore and from the hardware store down town.

Coach Jensen: Let us use indoor games.

Miss Lewis: Lent us a record.

Mary Jean: Lent us the Indian and Pioneer book she had made.

Jeanette: Brought rugs to sit on.

Miss Gans (visiting faculty member from Teachers College, Columbia University): Lent us her hassocks. Told us a story at her party. Sent us a telegram from New York. Let her students help us.

Miss Gans' Students: Carried typewriters. Showed us how to type. Wrote down our autobiographies while we dictated them. Wrote note to thank us for keeping their blackboards clean. Took us to the lumber yard. Visited us and answered our questions.

Professor Stock: Took us through the radio department. Let us talk and sing through the microphone while the others listened in the next room. Showed us on a machine the sound waves our voices made. Sent wireless messages to us while we had earphones on.

Elaine: Lent us eight phonograph records. Carried up the mice.

Mr. Evans: Lent us an old Buick car for two weeks.

Mr. McClum: Drove his new car beside ours and explained the differences in gear-shift, fan-belt, and other things.

Mr. Smith: Helped us find out about radio, electricity, and magnetism. Explained how the car worked.

Professor Reynolds: Took us through the art department. Showed us frescos and other things the college students were making. Let some of us go back later and look through his design folders.

I need not point out that others besides the children helped to make our curriculum. From the first day, Mr. Jenkins, our custodian, was one of our finest friends and a most valuable member of our group. When I returned from the library one morning, I found the children gathered in the machine-room next our own, listening

and watching and questioning intently as Mr. Jenkins showed them how the concrete-testing machine tested all the concrete that had gone into the new Commons building. On another occasion he showed them, a few at a time, the blueprint room with the men at work in it. (Later, he showed this room to the college students and parents). One day he took us into the furnace-room and heating-tunnel to explain how all the college buildings were heated from a central plant. I had been engaged for a few moments with one of the students, and by the time I joined the party, Mr. Jenkins was talking to a small group close around him. Some of the other children were quite beyond my reach in the narrow tunnel, whispering and pointing things out to one another and apparently not listening to Mr. Jenkins. I was disappointed and surprised and school-marm that I'm afraid I still am, said loudly enough for all to hear me, "Excuse me, Mr. Jenkins, but I'm wondering since those fellows down there aren't interested enough and courteous enough to listen to what you have to say, if they had not better return to the room."

They looked at me a little surprised, and not a bit guiltily, and Mr. Jenkins replied, "I've showed that group about this part of the tunnel, Miss Fox, and told them they could move on ahead and wait for this bunch. The place is too narrow for me to show more than half at a time."

We all adored Mr. Jenkins!

- *Parents, Faculty, Students and Community Cooperate*

Our parents, too, were most cooperative and helpful. I knew most of them well and sought to get acquainted with the others. They came to the school frequently. Once a week during the noon hour I invited parents, college students, and anyone who was interested to join in a dis-

cussion of our common problems. We talked about what the children were doing at school and how, if at all, it was affecting what they were doing or saying at home. We discussed report cards, irritability and nervousness, ways of evaluating child growth, the role of independent thinking in a child's living, cooperative working together, the relation of the school to the broader social situation, and many other things. The parents and students contributed greatly to the consideration of our problems.

It was one of the fathers who sent up the mice, one pair of which reproduced so opportunely one June morning. It was another father who gave us the thrilling experiences with radio and wireless telegraphy. We paid him a number of visits and found him as apt and understanding at working with children as with his adult students. Other professors on the campus took an interest in our interests and seemed glad that we were interested in theirs. So we became better acquainted with the college campus and its people, with its new and old buildings, its barns and live-stock, its flowers and shrubbery, its art department, its summer lecture series and recitals, its bookstore, and its amphitheatre. Others in the community not directly connected with the school contributed in whatever way we asked, giving us lumber and lending us a victrola and an automobile.

The day that our automobile arrived was a very exciting one. Jerry had come to school the morning before with the information that he had stopped in at the Blair Motor Shop on his way to school and had told Mr. Evans that we were looking for an old car to use at school. Mr. Evans had said all right, he thought he could get us an old one for a couple of weeks if somebody would drive it up. We had followed a number of clues for just such an offer but had had no success. And now Jerry was so casual about the whole transaction that

a little later I set about to check upon it. All arrangements had been made just as Jerry had said. Once again I felt a bit of guilt at having underrated children.

Well, the automobile came—an old 1925 Buick—a chug-chug-chugging up the hill and we all ran out to see it. A couple of youngsters had posted a sign, "Please reserve this space for the school's car", by the parking space nearest our building. Into that space it was driven, in full view from our windows. We all had to climb into it, of course, to see how straight up and down were the backs of the seats, to look through the small rear window, and to make a number of novel discoveries.

Mr. Smith, a young student friend, who had been helping us study radio now helped us feel more at home with the old car. There was so much to learn about it, and when later in the week another student, Mr. McClum, drove his new car beside ours, the comparison between the two was most interesting. Several of the older boys made a more thorough study of the two cars, using charts, books, magazines, and designs of models and engines.

The car served in other ways, too. Someone was using it almost every hour of the day as a setting for dramatic play and games, as a library, as a committee meeting place, as an inspiration for art, verse, or song. When the day came for it to be taken back to the garage, we all gathered around with considerable feeling. A tire was flat and had to be fixed. We each took our turn at the pump. Then, with Mr. Smith at the wheel, we pushed it out to the top of the hill. A half-dozen youngsters jumped in, the rest of us gave it a shove, and with frequent sputters and loud farewell bangs, our Buick disappeared around the curve at the foot of the hill.

With Miss Gans and the students in her classes we were on most intimate terms. What went on in the college classes

and in our school we deliberately coordinated. I attended the college classes whenever I could and frequently the children, too, were invited to participate in the students' discussions. The students helped us in many ways and we helped them as well. Two of our boys volunteered to keep their blackboards clean. One morning when the students came to class they saw this note on the board, written in a boyish hand, "Say, how do you like the way the boards look? Are they O.K.?" That afternoon the boys found this note, "The boards lookswell. You are doing a grand job. Thank you."

• *We Assume Other Responsibilities*

When Miss Gans left for New York at the end of the third week, the children gave a party for her—a gala surprise party out under the trees. We planned what committees were needed and everyone set to work to make the party a success. The place chosen for the party was at the side of the building which had no door. There were several tables to be carried out, and many chairs. I recall with what a shock I first saw the boys on the table committee handing the chairs, one at a time and with considerable care, out through the windows to two girls who were waiting there—so much more sensible solution to the problem than carrying them up the inside stairs, out the door, down the front steps, and around the building. I caught myself exhorting them to be careful of the windows and then was embarrassed at my stupidity. They had already considered the danger of breaking the windows and none was broken.

I have never seen a party, children's or adults', carried through with such artistry in every detail. In fact, there was an air of dependability and independence and good common sense in that group of children that I have rarely seen rivaled. Just how much of it grew out of the responsibility that had been theirs from the be-

ginning I do not know. But I was continually impressed by their enthusiastic attack on problems vital to them, and by the mature manner in which they saw their various enterprises through to successful completion.

Seats, tables, and chairs were not assigned in the schoolroom. The children selected drawers for their lockers, two children to a drawer, where they kept their particular belongings. Everything else we used in common as the situation prescribed. The children helped themselves to materials and used them with discretion, sitting or working wherever seemed best as to light, space, and quiet.

Our hours at first were from nine to twelve, and the doors were locked the rest of the day. But the three hours went by much too rapidly with so many things to be done. Requests were made for afternoon use of the work-bench, the typewriters, books, watercolors. So after discussing the matter pro and con, the risks involved when we left the doors unlocked, the responsibility that was ours whenever we used the supplies or equipment, we decided to keep the doors open all day. Mr. Jenkins unlocked them at seven-thirty every morning. Many times on my way to an early class I would see a number of children already at work with perhaps a few visitors present. We had decided that only those who had something definite to do were to use the room when I was not there. They could go in to get balls and bats, of course, or to return books which they had taken home for the night, but unless they had something important to settle down to, without disturbing others at work, they were to play out-of-doors.

The room was well used, to be sure, and all that was in it. At any hour of the day one might have found children typing a letter or story, modeling with clay, making something of wood, reading a book or a newspaper, playing the victrola, drama-

tizing a story on the long table which we used as a stage. One might have seen college students there, too, browsing through our books, making notes, and talking with the children.

During the afternoon the children often were engaged about the campus in a number of ways: one or two sitting on the steps of the Commons building painting the valley below and the snow-capped mountains; some making sketches of children at play, of a professor striding across the "quad", of animals at the barns; some playing ball, collecting rocks, singing or dancing at the amphitheatre, or reading stories together. Children, and outside friends as well, played in the car at all hours and thoroughly enjoyed it, willingly observing the rules set up to govern such pleasure.

All this did not work out automatically, but involved much discussion and continuous planning and checking. Usually at an early hour we would plan our program for the morning and sometimes for the week. Often such a memo as this would be left on the board for reference:

THINGS WE SHOULD DO THIS WEEK

Finish loosening soil about the shrubs
Plan Canyon party for July 14th
Write letters to people who have helped us
Return the victrola
Finish autobiographies and bring photographs for them
Choose and order the books for the library

We discussed often the things we were doing together in terms of how well they were working out, and what changes would help them to work out better. We talked about the books we had read, the news of the day and the problems growing out of it, the trips we took, the radio Fer-ron was making, the use and care of materials and equipment, the pictures I had brought from New York City and my experiences there, the new-born mice and their rapid growth. Out under the trees we read the stories my pupils in Bronxville

had written, stories we were writing, our autobiographies, and choice books.

We paid little attention, if any, to age or grade levels, grouping ourselves variously from time to time. Some things we all did together. Sometimes an older child worked with one or two younger ones, and vice-versa. Sometimes the younger ones worked together. Our radio expert was nine years old, but the older boys and younger ones worked with him, all of us eager to help him finish his radio. All of us took most of the trips, although at times a few children who had been to the barns or had already seen the modern kitchens in the Commons building asked to stay in the room and work on their bookends, type a story, or finish reading an article on magnetism. It was only a few of the children who were especially interested in art who visited the art department a second time. It was interest and purpose, then, rather than age or grade that bound us together. I think that our lives were made richer—certainly mine was—through association with people of different ages and different backgrounds and abilities.

The six weeks flew by all too swiftly, crowded to the brim, though with much more continuity and organization than this account would indicate. There were possibilities that we quite overlooked, to be sure,—very important ones for democracy as I see it now,—and areas barely touched upon that call for further experimentation. Therein lies the challenge for the future.

Our last few days were the fullest of all. Had we come five and a half weeks earlier to a schoolroom all nicely set up, we should have been content to leave it so. But that had not been the case. We had hauled or borrowed or bought everything that was there and it was our responsibility, which no one questioned, to return the things to the rightful owners and places. This was more laborious and a much less exciting job than we had anticipated. But we took it in rampant stride.

Our last common venture—a long, hot hike up the Canyon, with a picnic and a chat in the shade by the cool Logan river—was as happy a climax as it was fitting to the unique and thrilling experience that had been ours together.



Vagabond Song

There is something in the autumn that is native to my blood—
Touch of manner, hint of mood;
And my heart is like a rhyme,
With the yellow and the purple and the crimson keeping time.

The scarlet of the maples can shake me like a cry
Of bugles going by.
And my lonely spirit thrills
To see the frosty asters like smoke upon the hills.

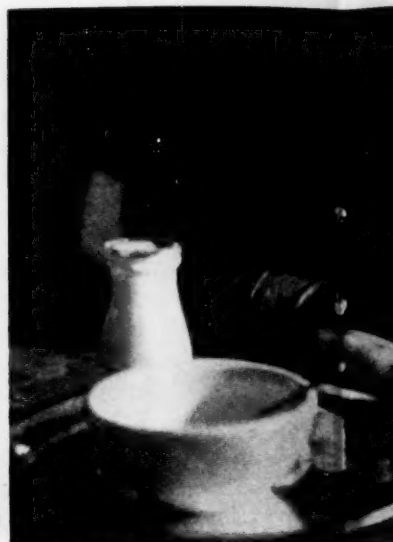
There is something in October sets the gypsy blood astir;
We must rise and follow her,
When from every hill of flame
She calls and calls each vagabond by name.

—Bliss Carman
From My Poetry Book



HEARING

"Parents' and Children's School", Midland, Mich.



TASTING



SEEING

Melvin Martinson

FEELING



"Parents' and Children's School", Midland, Mich.



"All the Children", New York City.



SMELLING

"Living and Learning", New Rochelle, N. Y.

Making Use of Sensory Experiences

Sharing—the culmination of a satisfying experience



"As the Door Opens", Germantown Friends School, Germantown, Pa.

Radio: PIED PIPER or EDUCATOR?

What sensory experiences do children have while listening to radio programs and what effect do these experiences have upon their emotional, social, and conceptual growth? Mr. DeBoer of Chicago Teachers College discusses these experiences and suggests ways in which radio programs for children may be improved.

• FEW TOPICS of interest to parents and teachers of young children have aroused so much controversy as the question whether children's radio programs are an instrument of exploitation, a form of harmless entertainment, or a means for the development of a greater appreciation of life. Judging by those expressions of opinion which are found in published sources, the majority of commentators incline to the view that radio has at least failed to play a significantly beneficial part in the education of children. Even commercial observers have deplored what they regard as the poor business sense exhibited by sponsors of allegedly objectionable children's programs. "Into the ears of defenseless children," asserts Don Gridley in *Printer's Ink* for April 9, 1936, "there were poured the moans and shrieks of dying men and women; the sharp, menacing rattle of the machine guns; the language of the gutter and all the other ingredients of the hair-raising thriller."

Certainly there are enormous educational potentialities in this new agency of communication. More than thirty million radio sets, in addition to seven million auto radios, are in daily use in the United States. On the basis of recent investigations, the

average time spent by a child in listening to the radio has been estimated at approximately two and a half hours daily. When it is remembered that the child listens to the radio for twelve months in the year, that he listens voluntarily and that he is ordinarily a highly cooperative listener, it becomes apparent that for good or ill the radio is an influential partner of the school in the business of educating children.

There is cause for apprehension in the fact that this great educative project is conducted almost entirely upon a commercial basis and that the welfare of children is necessarily considered only secondarily, if at all. On this point President William A. Orton of Smith College recently remarked before the sixth annual Institute for Education by Radio, "But in regard to the culture, the intelligence, and the morale of our democracy, we still believe for the most part in the genial destiny of good luck . . . so we expose our young to commercial stimuli of a mechanized culture . . . to the syndicated comic strip, the funnies, the commercial movies, commercialized sport, commercialized radio . . . and we assume that out of all this they will 'naturally' develop intelligence, morale, and a sense of values equal to the demand that modern citizenship will make upon them."

• Effect Upon Emotional and Social Growth

So far as the immediate effect of the radio drama upon the emotions of children is concerned, there can be little doubt that the average boy or girl responds vigorously and often violently. Studies recently made by the writer reveal that

groups of children listening to a simple story of child experience with fairly rapid action, clutched furniture tightly, wept, laughed uproariously, or gave unmistakable signs of intense fear or anxiety. In subsequent laboratory experiments undertaken by the writer both boys and girls of all ages from six to sixteen registered changes in pulse rate as large as fifty beats per minute, violent changes in blood pressure, and extreme irregularities in respiration. Such cases were typical rather than unusual. On the other hand, marked changes were noted also, particularly with respect to "skin resistance," in the case of a boy listening to the broadcast of a baseball game.

It is difficult to say whether such stimulation is injurious to children. Emotionality is induced more frequently and more easily in persons who are tired or in ill health than in those who are well and rested. Moreover, in cases of mild emotion, radio programs probably have a desirable tonic effect. In violent emotion, however, it is reasonable to assume that prolonged listening, day after day, may be injurious to the health of children.

Of greater significance, perhaps, is the long-range effect of radio programs upon the emotional and social growth of children. Very little evidence is as yet available on this question. That the drama, other than radio drama, may influence the emotional life of the spectator has long been known. Dramatics, both from the point of view of the performer and of the spectator, have been employed with the insane and with the emotionally unstable for its therapeutic value. But the most extensive study of the effects of the drama upon the personalities of children was made several years ago by the Moscow Theater for Children.

The staff of the Moscow Theater used children's plays to study their effects upon children not only during the performance

itself, but also in the days immediately following. Children of extreme emotional types and of widely divergent intellectual levels were paired at these performances. Their physical reactions during tense moments of the plays were written down by trained theater workers without the children's knowledge. These records were supplemented by reports of the children's teachers concerning their behavior during the two or three days following the visit to the theater; by visits to the schools by theater workers the day after the performance, five days after, three weeks after, and sometimes after a longer interval; by data concerning the child's behavior and his comments on the play to his family (as discovered through a questionnaire to the parents); and such creative products of the child as drawings, paintings, stories and games inspired by the play.

These workers found that to a certain extent it was possible to determine the anticipated reaction of a child to certain emotional aspects of a production. In some cases, however, the responses of some of the extreme type children were contrary to expectation. Such unusual and unexpected reactions were understood on further investigation in the light of the past experiences of the children. The observation of the children during the performances revealed that girls were more restrained, more rhythmic, more temperate in emotional outbursts, and more homogeneous as to group reactions than were the boys. Group reactions of boys proved to be intermittent, chaotic, and changeable. The boys were found to react with the whole body, with all-absorbing pulsation, while the girls moved the muscles of the face and the upper part of the body. The boys frequently shouted and laughed, while the girls mumbled quietly or whispered and smiled. In similar experiments conducted by the writer in the observation of children listening to radio programs,

like reactions were noted, with the exception that many of both the boys and the girls gave evidence of extreme tension or even distress without engaging in body movement.

In addition to the techniques already mentioned, a series of "analytical consultations" were conducted with specially selected small groups of children of approximately equal age and social background and of normal "emotionality." They were asked such questions as these: "How would you behave if you were to find yourselves in the same circumstances as the characters in the play?" "How would you enact certain roles in certain scenes if you were to play in the show?" "What changes or corrections would you make if you were participating in the production of the play?" When it became possible, through a tactful approach, to dispossess the child of a conscious or subconscious desire to say what the adults expected him to say, it was possible to discover the attitudes of the learner to such vital problems as anti-social conduct.

• *Effect Upon Attitudes*

The effects of radio programs upon children's attitudes also still lie largely in the field of the unexplored. F. H. Lumley of Ohio State University conducted such a study on a small scale about five years ago. Before and after listening to a talk dealing with the city of Denver, pupils marked a list of words which might be applied to it. All the words were tested against vocabulary ratings for sixth grade children. Their responses on the attitude scale were compared with those of children in a control group who had not heard the program. Lumley concluded that the talk had appeared to make children's attitudes toward the city of Denver more favorable. If, however, the evidence assembled by Peterson and Thurstone concerning the effects of motion pictures upon children's at-

titudes has any bearing on the problem of radio, we may be reasonably certain that children's attitudes are fundamentally and permanently affected by what they hear on the radio.

The investigations of Cantril and Allport were conducted with adults, but some of their findings are suggestive with respect to the problem of children's radio programs. "Words coming from the lips of a speaker spatially distant," declare these writers, "are devoid of their personal setting and seem to the listeners to be psychologically as well as physically distant." Laughter, they found, is less intense in all radio audiences. Students, for example, regard humor as the more enjoyable when the lecturer is present. They summed up their findings with this series of experiments as follows: "Radio seems to have a slightly dulling effect upon higher mental processes."

Other psychological studies have revealed that people are less critical of things heard than of things read; they are more suggestible when the suggestion is spoken than when it is written; they are definitely less critical, less analytical, and more passively receptive when listening to the radio than when they are face to face with the speaker.

• *Children's Preferences for Radio Programs*

A careful analysis of children's preferences for radio programs on the various age levels throws interesting light upon the basic factors conditioning their responses to radio programs. In a study conducted by the writer with approximately one thousand Chicago school children it was found that while mystery and horror stories are conspicuously absent among the programs consistently popular with children in all age groups, child adventure series lead the list of radio programs preferred by all children. Some, though not

all, of these programs deal with the detection of crime and the apprehension of criminals, but the qualities common to all these programs are action and suspense. A notable element in the programs which are preferred by young children is the presence of child characters in the story. Programs involving adult interest were popular only among the older children, but humor programs such as Eddie Cantor, Amos and Andy, and Jack Benny were equally popular with children of all age groups. Similar evidence concerning the activities of juvenile characters in the play was produced in the experiments utilizing systematic observation of children's overt responses.

An interesting contrast may be found between children's interests in reading and their interests in radio programs. Grant and White, for example, in their study of the reading interests of six hundred children, discovered a strong preference for animal stories, fairy stories, folklore, and poetry, in the order mentioned. But in the tabulations of the preferences of Chicago primary children in radio programs, only the Singing Lady resembles any of these four leaders in theme. On the other hand, radio programs based upon child experiences such as Little Orphan Annie and Jack Armstrong exceeded the Singing Lady in popularity, even with primary children, although child experience ranked eighth in the list of fifteen themes reported by Grant and White. Moreover, while wide differences have been found in the reading interests of boys and girls in the primary school years, the radio interests of these children were substantially alike. Jordan, for example, found that girls liked reading material dealing with home and school, fairy stories, stories with historical backgrounds, books addressed predominantly to the "instincts" of motherliness, kindness, attention to others, response to approval and scornful behavior,

and rivalry, while boys liked war, school and sports, Boy Scouts, and strenuous adventure. The only significant difference noted in the radio interests of boys and girls appeared in the greater interest of boys in detective stories, and of girls in music and humor. A growing interest in dramatic action and adventure throughout the elementary grades has also been noted in the field of reading, but the Chicago children expressed a first preference for dramatic action in all age groups in the field of radio programs.

The determination of children's interests in reading and in radio programs is significantly conditioned by those factors governing the formation of preferences in the respective fields. Investigators in the field of children's interests in reading have stressed the factor of availability in the formation of reading preferences. Children tend to prefer the kinds of reading matter which are put within their reach, or which they can secure most conveniently. For that reason there is a diversity in reading preferences as wide as the diversity in home backgrounds, economic levels, and educational opportunities of children. In the case of radio, the factor of availability plays a less important part. If the child has access to a radio at all, he has access to all its programs at a given time. He is limited somewhat by the hours he is free to listen and by the restrictions placed upon him by his parents or guardians, but in the main he may enjoy the entire range of themes offered by the radio. While the selection offered is extremely limited as to quality, the range, however inadequately expressed, is probably as wide as that offered by the world of books within the comprehension of the great mass of children in the elementary school.

Probably the most important conclusion that may be drawn from the evidence is the fact that children respond to an extremely wide diversity of types of situa-

tions. The significance of this finding is difficult to overemphasize. It means that child interest does not depend upon second- or third-rate plots, such as many of the commercial sponsors insist upon supplying. A crouching lion in the midst of the jungle will produce a strong emotional response, but so will a grateful little boy telling his sister how much he thinks of her. A man making a ludicrous attempt to reach a high note when he is clearly not a singer will produce as great an emotional effect as a plane going into a tailspin. Blood and thunder are effective, but obviously not essential to a radio program to which children will respond.

• *Wherein Radio Programs Fail*

The chief criticism to be made of the average juvenile radio play is its vacuity rather than its venality. Most children's programs are perhaps relatively harmless, but they are also relatively useless. They present a series of emotional and intellectual choices which children would reject if they encountered them in real life. The formula for a given series is never varied; it offers a minimum of stimulation and surprise. The scripts are pot-boilers rather than creative achievements.

The typical formula for the plots of juvenile radio drama is illustrated in such situations from current radio series as these: a ranger on horseback pursues a gang of horse-thieves on a western ranch; an American girl poses as a princess in a foreign country in order to protect the real princess who is in danger; a boy flies to a South American jungle to search for a fabled treasure spot, and suddenly encounters a group of lions; a boy gets a job as reporter and receives an assignment to get photographs of the interior of an airplane factory believed to be owned by hostile foreign interests; a detective attempts to get the real facts concerning a haunted house.

Children listen to this unspeakable

drivel because they love action, movement, and conflict, and because they have not learned to be critical of the illusion so carelessly and even contemptuously created for them. But that is no good reason for exploiting the child's love of dramatic illusion. The same child will follow genuinely creative drama with the same avid interest, as the evidence I have cited indicates, and there is every reason to believe that he will gain more fundamental satisfactions, both aesthetic and social. More important still, the programs, if intelligently written, should relieve rather than intensify the numerous tensions and conflicts which result in maladjustments at all age levels. Moreover, radio drama can help children solve problems of their personal relations to other members of the family, their schoolmates, the adult world, and other members of community institutions.

• *Contributions of Improved Radio Programs*

Radio plays can accomplish results in the field of guidance not attainable through other media. Sometimes parents are unable to help, because they overpersonalize the children's problems. Teachers are often not aware of the problems, and if they were they would not undertake to mediate a situation in which parental relations are a factor. Children themselves are not aware of many of their difficulties or they are unable to identify them. If a difficulty is made clear to the child, he may resist the suggestion because of a natural tendency towards defense. Only when he encounters a parallel situation in a radio drama, in which the listener is disguised as the character in a play, will he be receptive to the guidance which the action of the story offers.

If the scripts for children's radio drama could be written by people who are not only gifted as writers of fiction for children, but capable of adapting their material to the technical requirements of ra-

dio drama, it would be interesting to see what vital services it could perform. Perhaps we could then have radio drama for children which is bright and keen and aware not only of the child and his interests, but also of the disturbing world in which the modern child grows up.

The use of radio for the emotional and social adjustment of children of course has obvious limitations. The kind of security a child needs when he lacks evidence of affection on the part of his parents or teachers can not be supplied by a radio play. Certain problems, however, are so common as to be excellent material for juvenile radio drama. There is, for example, the boy who is uninterested in books, art, or music, but is a fine athlete and interested in mechanical things. His family — grandparents, brothers, sisters, aunts, uncles—are for the most part professional or business people with strong cultural interests and cannot conceal their disappointment over the boy's lack of such interests. Or in the reverse situation, a young dreamer or budding poet lives in a family of go-getters. There is the child from a home of limited means who cannot compete with his fellow pupils in matters of dress, social activities, school supplies, and the like. Or the Jewish boy who discovers that he is not being invited to parties given by classmates, most of whom are Gentiles; or the children in the home of immigrant parents who are ashamed of their foreign background.

Some children could be immensely aided if they learned to confide in their parents. Certainly radio is an ideal instrument for the building of emotional attachments to such American ideals as freedom of speech, religion and assembly, in concrete situations, and of emotional loyalties that

transcend self-interest and include the welfare of human beings in all walks of life.

For young children it is important to provide ample opportunities for response to the listening experience. Observing and listening are essentially passive experiences and young children particularly are constantly poised for action. Thus a group of children at a Saturday afternoon movie are constantly shouting, squealing, waving their arms, or stamping their feet in response to the action on the screen. Our observation of groups of children listening to radio programs revealed a similar characteristic. It seems reasonable to assume that more constructive responses than mere physical activity should be encouraged. Radio programs which offer stimulation for the pursuit of hobbies, the formation of clubs (for the benefit of children, not a commercial sponsor), or the exploration of a community, should have a wide appeal. And why should not the radio assist rather than hinder the process of building desirable reading habits for children? How many of the current juvenile radio series contribute to a child's interest in books?

The emotional, social, and conceptual growth of the young child is dependent, in large measure, upon the world of ideas to which he has access only by means of the vehicle of the spoken word. If, as recent studies seem to indicate, even the child's mental ability in the early years is dependent upon the nature of his intellectual environment, the radio listening experiences of children are of crucial importance to parents and to society at large. The control of children's radio must, therefore, be placed in the hands of those whose chief concern is children rather than profits, as a policy of sheer social defense.



We Talk ABOUT THE WEATHER

These conversations of seven-year-olds show a background of sensory experiences which are contributing not only to their growth in language power, but to their social development as well. Miss Stern is a teacher in the Poe Training School, Wayne University, Detroit, Michigan.

• A CONVENIENT retreat from intimacy, the indifferent chit-chat of casual acquaintances, the safe refuge from boring companionship are implied in the adult bromidium, "We talked about the weather." Dulled by over-familiarity with our world, we choose this commonplace expression in brief dismissal of a subject which holds small splendor for us.

Children and poets, greeting exultantly the changing seasons, finding fresh vitality and joy in the magic of wind and rain and snow and sun, enjoying emotional intimacy with their world, are drawn into social intimacy when they talk about the weather.

Rain holds an endless fascination for the small child. His jubilant cry, "I can see and hear and smell the rain coming!" is construed by his classmates as an invitation to rush to the schoolroom windows to share the delight of a sudden spring rain. Joyously they talk together. There are many accounts of personal experiences. The conversation does not always have that lyric quality of expression we choose to call "creative". The frequently simple narrative accounts or comments are not always illuminated by the imaginative glow. But the character of their remarks, the ardent tone of utterance, the gaiety of mood give evidence of that satisfying

awareness of significant experience which precedes creative expression.

"I like to stand here and see the rain make a puddle," says Marion, a solemn child, and observing her absorbed contemplation in the rain making puddles, we know she is enjoying an intensity of experience which will later find articulation in more adequate word responses.

Benjamin shares her pleasure in puddles. "There was a big puddle of water, and I walked in it, and I went down, down, down!"

There are other brief comments. "I want to go out in my sun-suit and get all wet." "You can smell the cool air when the rain comes." "When I go home I can watch the rain drip down in little dribbles from the roof." "I can look up in the skies and see the clouds. The clouds are moving behind the trees. They are going someplace else to make it rain." "The rain sounds like pebbles falling." "The rain sounds like little drumsticks tap-tapping on a drum." "To me it sounds like somebody tap dancing. When it is raining and pouring hard it says rat-a-tat-tat, rat-a-tat-tat."

Richard, watching the raindrops trickling down the pane, repeats a few lines from Milne's "Waiting at the Window":

These are my two drops of rain
Waiting on the window pane.
I am waiting here to see
Which the winning one will be,
Both of them have different names.
One is John and one is James.

"Only I didn't name them," he adds, "because I have one on each side of the pane. I can tell them apart. Sometimes you have to blow on them to make them race faster."

Often there are brief poetic flashes from

children whose emotion finds expression in more imaginative fragments:

Raining, raining!
The sky grows dark,
Darker and darker.
The weakening clouds
Let down
The pouring rain.

The thirsty trees
Are swaying—
And swinging their branches
Upward—
Begging the sky for rain,
Rain, more rain!

Thunder is an angry giant
Breaking up the clouds.
Boom! Boom! Boom!
He grumbles,
And his eyes flash lightning.

In the spontaneous expressions of these young children there is always rhythm but seldom rhyme. Yet they show a marked partiality for rhyme in the enjoyment of favorite rain poems and nursery rhymes which they always request during these high moments of pleasure. The literary experience becomes associated with, and brings an enriched awareness to their own actual life experiences. Marion and Benjamin crow in delighted recognition of a familiar experience when they hear the nursery rhyme:

Old Dr. Foster
Went to Glo'ster
In a shower of rain;
He stepped in a puddle,
Up to the middle,
And never went there again.

Other old rhymes are requested: "The south wind brings wet weather", "Rain, rain, go to Spain", "One misty, moisty morning", and "When clouds appear like rocks and towers." A. A. Milne's "Happiness" becomes a source of hilarity when each child chooses to substitute his own name for John who had great big waterproof boots on. "The Storm" by Dorothy Aldis is popular for its last line, "The lightning is so sharp and bright, it sticks its

fingers through the night." Langston Hughes' "April Rain Song" comes close to one child's mood. "That poem whispers like the rain," she says.

Excitement runs high with the coming of the first snow of winter. Awe-struck with wonder at its soft tranquility, Armando murmurs.

[illegible]

"That reminds me of 'Velvet Shoes,'" says Wanda. "Read us 'Velvet Shoes.'" And in Elinor Wylie's poem the children find the same stillness and soundlessness that Armando has discovered. "Snow Toward Evening" by Melville Crane and "White Fields" by James Stephens vivify the mood, and Elizabeth Coatsworth's "Winter Rune," a riddle so easy to guess, brings hilarious laughter.

Eldie's interpretation is epicurean. "The snow looks like ice-cream and whipped cream, and heaps of mashed potatoes. Cotton candy is white and fluffy like snow, too." But on a windy day, impressed by the personification of the North Wind in the old Norse folk tale she creates a more poetic image,

The North Wind is a ghost
Dressed in snow.
The ghost whistles
And touches you
With icy fingers.
When you reach out for him
He disappears!

Eldie's description recalls other portrayals of the wind, "Wind Wolves" by William Sargent, "The Wind is a Cat" by Ethel Fuller, "The Moon's the North Wind's Cooky" by Vachel Lindsay, "Who Has Seen the Wind?" by Christina Rossetti, "To the Winter Wind" by John Gould Fletcher, "I Saw the Wind Today" by Padraic Colum, and "The Wind's Song" by G. Setoun. Conversation is centered around the variety of images which

poets have created around a common experience. Again literary experiences are assimilated into the stream of life experiences, intensifying the children's sensitivity to the world about them.

"Sometimes, at night, the wind talks to me. He has a voice," Dale speaks almost inaudibly. He does not often join in the conversation. "No one can ride the wind because he never stops." And then he adds:

The wind was strong last night!
He puffed himself up
Big!
And fat!
And he blew!
This morning I saw a tree
With its roots up.
Last night the wind was strong!

Talking about the night sets off a familiar association for Geraldine. For the first time she verbalizes an image:

Across the lake,
Behind some trees,
I saw a round moon
One night.
First it was very orange,
Then it grew whiter
And whiter!

Christine gives voice to a universal child experience, "Sometimes I can't run away from the moon. It comes along with me. The moon plays hide and seek with me."

On an icy morning the conversation sparkles with the glitter of the world. William begins,

I saw Fairyland
When I looked out
This morning.
The world was so shining bright
It made me think there never was night.

Lorraine gazing out of the window notes, "Jack Frost poured buckets of rain over the cars last night. Now they look as though they were wrapped in cellophane. An icy branch fell across one car. It curls like a shiny snake."

"I see the shining world! I see the glass trees!" exclaims Doris.

Joey was awake last night.

Last night I didn't sleep at all.
I kept looking at the trees.
The street lights were on,
The wind was blowing,
And the gleaming trees were swaying.

Dale, grown bolder, explains:

I know what makes the trees sparkle!
The reflection from the sun—
You can see the sun through the ice.
The golden sun makes the trees sparkle!

Betty finds satisfaction in the simple observation, "The ice weighs down the trees. But the wind pushes the trees and the icicles fall down."

Gladys is thinking of Walter de la Mare's "Silver" when she says, "The trees are tall slim ladies in silver evening gowns. They wear what you call a silver shoon!"

Whether or not we choose to label the spontaneous remarks of these children "creative expression" is optional. Perhaps we have surrounded the word "creative" with an aura of magic. We often get the end reports of creative writing but descriptions of beginnings and of developmental processes are rather vague. The teacher who is naive enough to inquire, "How did you do it?" is regarded with disdain as being unimaginative and is told there is no stereotyped procedure for promoting creative expression. Spontaneity of expression growing out of rich experiences is the answer, she is told. Yet spontaneous expression is sometimes barren of imagination.

We may prefer to call these individual responses resulting from a spontaneous association of ideas during group conversation, the raw material from which children later, as conscious craftsmen fashion a richer and more imaginative interpretation of their experiences.

Children who are emotionally stirred by the significance and beauty of an experience, recognizing the need for richer word responses, become interested in the artistic process of polishing, and giving more

graceful expression to their first reactions.

On a fine spring morning, flowers which the children bring to school in abundance are the subject of informal discussion, and in the course of conversation become associated with poetry which is familiar to them. The following day one child brings in a poem which she has written called, "Let's Wake Up the Flowers." Her use of the word "crimson" to describe roses catches the attention of the children. They become interested in flower colors and begin searching for words to express the variations in shade in the flowers in the room. For days they take delight in coming in with color synonyms. They are particularly fascinated by the variety of color in pansies. Christine remarks that if ever she wishes to describe something that is a mixture of beautiful color she will just call

it "pansy-colored." An interest in the colors various artists use in book illustrations follows. They become fastidious in their selection of the precise word to describe the colors different artists use. Such words as "pastel," "vivid," "iridescent," "hue," "scarlet," "cerise," "foreground," "background," "predominating color," and so on, become part of the group vocabulary. Later when they discover that color alone is not responsible for beauty, the center of interest shifts toward the contribution of form, design, and arrangement in nature, in pictures, and in word patterns.

Obviously, through frequent opportunities for free and intimate participation in democratic group conversations centered around mutual experiences, these children grow not only in language power, and in personality, but socially as well.

Milwaukee And The A. C. E. Convention

April 29-May 3, 1940

Milwaukee—the meeting place of the A.C.E. in 1940. In the days of long ago before any white man set foot upon American soil, an Indian brave, more restless than his brothers, wandered aimlessly into unknown parts. He gazed with astonishment at nature's wonderland. "Man-a-waukee (rich and beautiful land)!" said this surprised American. His guttersals christened a metropolis, and he was its first citizen, for Milwaukee stands on the "ashes of bygone wigwams." It was here that the Indians held their pow-wows of war and peace, and now the A.C.E. has recognized the advantages of its location and convention facilities and has chosen Milwaukee for its Forty-seventh Annual Convention.

The city has grown steadily until it is the thirteenth largest city in the United States with one hundred four public schools, eighty-nine private and parochial schools, a vocational school which is first and foremost of its kind, and seven colleges and universities.

There are seventy supervised playgrounds and twenty-five social centers which are responsible in part for the city's low crime rate. Consistent winning of numerous national awards has given Milwaukee recognition as the nation's healthiest and safest city. Milwaukee is also the tenth most important industrial city in the United States and has a harbor which is considered the most beautiful on the Great Lakes.

Be sure to join us at the A.C.E. Convention in Milwaukee—the meeting place of councils.—*Clara L. Johnson, local publicity chairman.*

**A New
Editor**

• HELEN BERTERMANN,
an assistant principal in
the public schools at Cincinnati, Ohio, succeeds Ruth Bristol as editor of "Among the Magazines" for Childhood Education during 1939-40. It is the policy of the Executive Board of the Association to invite a different person each year to serve as editor of the magazine reviews, thus putting into practice its belief in democratic living through sharing responsibility and learning by doing.

CHILDHOOD EDUCATION has been most fortunate in its selection of magazine editors. Miss Bertermann comes to the Editorial Board with a rich background of professional experience with both children and teachers, and with the added advantage of having had close contact with the national Association through serving as local chairman of the 1938 convention which was held at Cincinnati. She is well acquainted with the purposes and plans of the Association; she reads widely and with discrimination in the field of educational literature, and knows how to approach the problems of teachers and children in a practical and constructive way. Her reviews will be well worth reading.

We are particularly grateful to fellow editors of educational publications for their excellent cooperation in providing Miss Bertermann with copies of their publications so that she may have a wide field from which to make her selection of articles to review.

**Pictures of
A Child**

• MARION JOAN HAMP is a student at the National College of Education, Evanston, Illinois. She has prepared these ten candid camera shots of one of the nursery school children of whom she made a detailed study. We like the angles from which Miss Hamp has snapped Duncan and think that she has made good use of sensory experiences in learning to know Duncan better.

"Let us mount ten candid pictures of Duncan Wiggins in the Never-never Album. There, little Peter-Pan will never, never grow up; we shall see the essence of his childhood crystalized forever.

"The first picture was snapped on a bright, blue sunny day. It showed a sturdy, brown-

Across the

eyed boy seated at a low table, engrossed in his lunch. Suddenly, he looked up, between a bite of a brown sandwich and a drink of cool milk, and saw something outside the window which captured his fancy and wonder. A tuft of soft white cumulous cloud was scurrying across the sky, chased and tumbled by the wind. Duncan's face lit up with delight. Out shot both hands, small fingers grasping for the moving vision of blue and white. "Clouds! Up dere. Clouds!" He said, thoughtfully, slowly, "Where clouds going? Clouds moving. Where are clouds going?"

"The next picture, taken on the playground, showed a bundle of brown and gray energy engaged in filling a toy truck with gasoline. Kindred imagination helped one to understand that what might look like an ordinary bush-twig to someone else, was really a gas pump, as long as its owner and creator busily and conversationally filled his tank.

"The next picture could have been snapped many times. It showed a moving object which turned, jumped, hopped, skipped, stamped, and all of the time made elfish faces at itself. This was Duncan in a clowning mood, when everything was funny, all the world a joke, and everyone a playfellow.

"The fourth picture was taken when the air was electric with excitement. The children were learning how to make ginger-bread men. Who could not smile at this snap-shot of a big healthy boy in his high-necked smock, surreptitiously licking his rolling pin! White flour smudged his forehead and nose, but he grinned innocently at the camera.

"The next picture was taken when a new boy came timidly into the room full of busy strangers. Ronnie, the newcomer, looked confused and frightened until Duncan was introduced as a protector and friend. The picture caught Duncan as he ran to the toy locker, hauled out his favorite red truck, and hurried to Ronnie. 'For you,' he offered; then, turning to the other children, said, 'Dis Ronnie's truck.'

Editor's Desk

"What a gay colorful picture, this one of Duncan running on the playground, chasing and catching two colored streamers which flirted with him and the wind and lead both a merry, merry chase.

"The next picture was of a quiet scene in the resting room, where several children were looking at picture books. Little Charinne turned to the manger picture in the Petershams' *The Christ Child*. She was puzzled. Somehow, she should know who that was. She turned to Duncan, and, pointing to the Baby in the cradle, she asked, "What's dot?" Duncan replied, "Chi. Je-sus Chist."

"The eighth picture was of Duncan just after he had had a hair cut. His ears gleamed out anew, and the back of his neck was as round and well-trimmed as a little show-pony's, arching and stepping at the fair.

"This one was snapped when Duncan was eating dark red beets off the end of his fork. He took dainty bites and cocked his head over, wondering what was so different about them. Finally, he found it. "Beets taste *soft*," he exclaimed.

"Our last picture showed Duncan trying to grow up. Thus must close the Never-never Album—for Peter Pan never grows up. It was taken when Duncan chose his bright red picture book on trains, boats, and airplanes. He held it in his lap, named each object as he pointed to it. But not content to remain the innocent and unlettered, he wagged his head wisely, and "read" the book. Snap! Bang! Closes the back of the Never-never Album, and Duncan skips out to become a man."

Portrait Artists At Six

an experience which she states "was so thoroughly enjoyed by the children of my class that I feel it had real value." She shares it with the readers of CHILDHOOD EDUCATION.

• MRS. MIRIAM K. PICH-
ENY of Roselle, New Jer-
sey, sent us this account of

"One day a six-year-old passed between the easel and the windows, silhouetting her perfect profile in life size on the easel pad. Delighted, I proceeded to trace the outline boldly in black crayon, while thirty little faces crowded around us, eyes wide, mouths open.

"When the picture was completed, I tore it from the pad and asked Alice if she would like to have it. As she said, 'Oh, yes,' there were whispered 'Do me's' from the awe-stricken group.

"Alice was invited to 'do' Bobby and with a little help soon had a fine likeness which she presented to him. And so we went around the group. The results of these first attempts were given to the children to take home.

"Some time later the class was called upon to do its share in the bazaar to raise money for the milk fund. We decided to make silhouette portraits and sell them to the parents, using a lantern slide machine when there was not enough sunshine.

"Committees took charge of the more difficult work, cutting the pictures from black oak tag, pasting the silhouettes to white darby board, and framing the pictures with passepart-out. Each child shellacked his own. Needless to say, every parent wanted her child's picture and the milk fund benefitted accordingly."

The New Cover

• CHILDHOOD EDUCATION
celebrated its sixteenth
birthday in September by

appearing in a new cover. It was difficult to choose a cover which would meet the needs of a twentieth century adolescent and at the same time please the tastes of its many friends. The present design represents the combined ideas of dozens of people, collected over a period of five years, and we hope will be accepted by them as an effective compromise.

A few readers have already expressed their opinions with such adjectives as clean, crisp, eye-catching and easy to read. One person has objected to its conservative character and another to its ultra-modern design. We hope that many of you will let us know your opinion, not only of the cover but of the contents as well.

Book...

REVIEWS

Editor, ALICE TEMPLE

YOUR CHILD'S MUSIC. By Satis N. Coleman. New York: The John Day Company, 1939. Pp. 180. \$1.75.

Here is a very sensible book for parents who are seriously interested in the musical training of their children. Any teacher of young children may safely recommend it to any parent who asks her what to do about Mary's special musical talent, or about Johnny's refusal to practice the piano. And the teacher herself will receive from reading the book many suggestions for musical experiences and activities to undertake with her children.

Many of Mrs. Coleman's ideas were worked out with her own children, with private pupils, and with the students of the Lincoln School of Teachers College in New York where she has taught for a number of years. Her *Creative Music for Children*, *The Drum Book*, and others are already well-known. For very young children there is no better book of songs than *Singing Time* which Mrs. Coleman wrote in collaboration with Alice G. Thorn.

Some of the problems discussed by Mrs. Coleman in *Your Child's Music* are how to find out where the child's talent lies, how to overcome voice inhibitions, how to write tunes in simple number notation, the dangers of "showing off," the musical development of the infant, when piano or violin study should begin, health and music study, and the music problem in summer.

Especially to be commended is Mrs. Coleman's strong denunciation of the current emphasis on do-re-mi in many schools because of a ruling "from above" that it must be done. What riches are missed, in this preoccupation with the mechanics, of the vital, thrilling experience that music should be!

The discussion of radio listening and of swing music in the book are inadequate. Mrs. Coleman seems to think that the undesirable types of singing on the radio can be avoided

simply by not turning on the radio. With the movies full of such singing and with older brothers and sisters hearing it at all their dances, the problem is not so simple as that. A more positive and direct approach would be for parents to listen with their children, and for teachers to permit swing to come into the school. One must get the bad and the good together in order to compare them. Much of the modern swing is good for listening as well as for dancing; much of it is interesting melodically and harmonically, though Mrs. Coleman classifies all of it as "hyper-rhythmic."—Alton O'Steen, *Ohio State University*.

MUSIC EDUCATION IN THE ELEMENTARY SCHOOL. Sacramento: California State Department of Education, 1939. Pp. 152. \$1.00.

Although this publication was planned for the guidance of teachers of the state of California, it is so wide in scope and comprehensive in treatment that elementary teachers anywhere should find it extremely helpful in planning music experiences for their children. Like certain other publications of the California State Department of Education, such as *Teachers Guide to Child Development: Manual for Kindergarten and Primary Grades*, this book represents the cooperative effort of many persons qualified to deal with the subject; in this case, supervisors and teachers of music in different parts of the state. Furthermore, like the earlier book, it is a manual, a guide, rather than a course of study.

The book consists of seven chapters, each contributed by a different sub-committee under the leadership of a general committee appointed by the California-Western School Music Conference. The introductory chapter presents the general point of view concerning music education in the elementary school. Succeeding chapters deal in turn with vocal music, music in

relation to units of work, music appreciation, creative expression in music, instrumental music and music in rural schools. There is recognition throughout of "the dual function of music education (1) in developing skill and knowledge of music, and (2) in contributing to the enrichment of the integrative program".

The chapter, "Music as an Integrative Experience in the Major Learnings," describes a number of "Units of Work" and suggests various types of music experiences which may be used to enrich them. One is glad to note that the Committee included the following statement in this connection: "In certain curriculum units where the possibilities for rich music experiences are limited, children should participate daily in music in other areas" (p. 17). Too often when the curriculum is organized on the units-of-work plan, the effort to relate all subjects to the central theme results in the use of mediocre material or the total neglect of the subject or activity.

Carefully selected book lists, both for children and teachers, add to the value of this book. *Music Education in the Elementary School* is a distinct contribution to the literature of the subject.—A. T.

NURSERY SCHOOL EDUCATION. By Josephine C. Foster and Marion L. Mattson. New York: D. Appleton-Century Company, 1939. Pp. 361. \$2.00.

Nursery School Procedure by the authors of *Nursery School Education* was published some ten years ago. The earlier book was one of the first in this particular field. During the intervening years much material dealing with the theory and practice of the nursery school and reports of numerous research studies of child development have been published. Mrs. Foster and Miss Mattson have felt the need, therefore, of completely reorganizing and enriching the first book. They have planned the new volume "for the beginning teacher, for the teacher who has fallen into a rut, and for the mother who wishes to introduce some nursery school methods into her own home" (p. vii). In content, organization, and style, *Nursery School Education* is admirably suited to meet the needs of such students.

Part I answers the question, "What is a nursery school?" Part II deals with the characteristics of two-, three-, and four-year-olds; how children of these age levels learn, and how best to promote their physical and mental health. "The Nursery School Day" is the title of Part III. Here the authors discuss the several aspects of the program: free play with carefully selected materials, procedures designed to form habits of cleanliness, the luncheon period, provision for rest and naps, language activities, the use of books and stories, and music. Part IV is concerned with the nursery school plant, play equipment, the staff, records and reports. Finally, in Part V, parent education and the place of the nursery school in the community come in for their share of attention.

The book is simply and interestingly written. Twenty-five photographs of children engaged in typical nursery school activities and one hundred twenty reading references, including books and magazines, add to its usefulness.—A. T.

WATER—WEALTH OR WASTE. By William Clayton Pryor and Helen Sloman Pryor. New York: Harcourt, Brace and Company, 1939. Pp. 243. \$2.50.

Here is the most recent book of the Pryors, those popular makers of photograph-story books such as *The Train Book*, *The Airplane Book*, *The Cowboy Book*, and many others. This time, however, it is for the older children that the authors have planned their book. *Water—Wealth or Waste* presents in vivid and often dramatic form all the phases of the subject and its importance to human life and activity.

To one who had some experience with the New England hurricane and floods last year and the serious drought of this past summer, the pages dealing with flood control and water conservation were of special interest. Boys and girls in the New York City area will read for the first time, perhaps, the thrilling story of the development of one of the greatest water systems in the world. Similarly, children living in the vicinity of a great power dam will learn more about it and other projects like it. But having read any one chapter most children will turn eagerly to the others which are to be found in this most interestingly written and informative book with its lovely photographs.—A. T.

Books...

FOR CHILDREN

Editor, MAY HILL ARBUTHNOT

AND THERE WAS AMERICA. *Written and illustrated by Roger Duvoisin. New York: Alfred A. Knopf Inc., 1938. Pp. 75. \$2.00.*

It is refreshing to come upon such a book as *And There Was America*. Mr. Duvoisin's heroes range from Leif Ericson to William Penn, and the stories follow an amusing pattern. Columbus set out for China and found America. Ponce de Leon could not find the Fountain of Youth but he discovered Florida. De Soto searched for gold and found the Mississippi. On a humble scale, this is the familiar pattern of every life. In the person of these heroes it takes on added significance.

This book may not fit into units on the postman, the groceryman and other community helpers but it is a salutary attempt to give very young children a first glimpse of that glorious company of heroes that illumine our early history. While the dictators glamourize history for their never-too-young-children, it is pleasant to hear Mr. Duvoisin remarking, "And there was America."

His vivid illustrations use the child's own drawing idiom and help make this an important book for children five to ten years old.

NICODEMUS AND THE GANG. *By Inez Hogan. New York: E. P. Dutton and Company, 1939. Pp. 53. \$1.00.*

The Gang builds a club house in spite of difficulties, the clash of personalities, and the antics of Little Sister. Almost the best of the irresistible Nicodemus series.

THIS WAY TO THE CIRCUS. *By Emilia Hodel and Franz Bergmann. Boston: Hale, Cushman and Flint, Inc., 1939. Pp. 96. \$2.00.*

When you treat yourself to the pleasure of reading to some child, *This Way to the Circus*, you put the book down with the pious hope that this great American institution, the circus, may never perish from the earth. Of course, the small boy in the story expects to stay close to his mother, but of course he does not. Once he is well lost in this dazzling circus world, things begin to happen. Lovely lady acrobats, clowns, wild animals, lion tamers, all have a part in the happenings. Finding his mother might have

proved a major disaster except that he was allowed to take home with him the little stray dog that had been the partner in his high adventures. Here is the circus for children four to seven. Story and pictures are gay and amusing.

LUCIO AND HIS NUONG; A Tale of the Phillippine Islands. *Story and pictures by Lucy Herndon Crockett. New York: Henry Holt and Company, 1939. Unpaged. \$2.00.*

A striking and exotic picture book about which there is bound to be a lively difference of opinion. The double-page spreads in brilliant green, red, and brown are crowded with such a multiplicity of details that each page demands and rewards long scrutiny. Most adults will consider these details too confusing for children, but those to whom we showed the book were fascinated with them and enjoyed their beauty, humor, and story-telling quality.

The tale concerns a family dilemma over a choice of work for Lucio, the six-year-old. It is finally decided that his task shall be the training of the lazy, savage nuong (water buffalo), because no one else in the family can manage the beast and these creatures usually like children. The story that follows is slight and is more amusingly told by the pictures than the text. For children seven to ten.

COUNTRY BUNNY AND THE LITTLE GOLD SHOES. *As told to Jenifer by Du Bose Heyward. Pictures by Marjorie Flack. Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1939. Pp. 48. \$1.50.*

It is a long time since we have had a fanciful tale for very young children as charming in theme, style, and format as *The Country Bunny*. Two artists, one with brushes dipped in spring-time colors and one with words, have combined to make this choice book.

Mr. Heyward tells us that there are really five Easter bunnies and they are the five swiftest, kindest, and wisest bunnies in the world. Of course, every young bunny dreams of growing up to be one of the five and the little country bunny especially dreamed this dream. She had to tuck it away, however, because life made so many demands upon her. How she became one of the five is told with lovely simplicity.

Among...

THE MAGAZINES

Editor, HELEN BERTERMANN

THE PRIMARY UNIT—AN AID TO CHILDREN'S PROGRESS. By Mary Dabney Davis. *School Life*, July 1939, 24:297-298, 318-319.

The primary unit plan or the primary school organization has been developed in a number of cities to meet the problems of varied stages of intellectual, physical, social, and emotional maturation of young children. Miss Davis attributes the transition from conventional organization in certain cities to the efforts of teachers, principals, supervisors, and superintendents to study children and to give them a fair start in their school life. She describes subsequent advantages of the reorganization to parents, children, and teachers, and indicates preliminary steps for regrouping.

Units based upon the social maturity of the children take the place of grades, and one teacher may guide the group for two or three years. This organization is a challenging and forward step in the direction of putting to work "the philosophy underlying the modern school which maintains that the schools must begin with children as they are and must provide an environment favorable to their growth and development."

SAFETY PORTFOLIO. *The Nation's Schools*, August 1939, 24:33-48.

A group of eleven articles amply illustrated with photographs, diagrams and drawings presents a picture of safety education, its needs, methods and results. Four are of outstanding interest to teachers of young children.

In "Organizing for School Safety," Kenneth N. Beadle emphasizes the fact that safety cannot merely be taught but must be experienced. He urges teachers to become informed about all phases of safety education. As concrete help he offers twelve suggestions for planning a complete school safety program.

Another article prepared by the Safety Research Institute offers a list of points of hazards, under headings based on their location, by which fire, health, and accident hazards may be checked.

H. Louise Cottrell suggests in "Learning

Safety from Play" that the time to begin safety education is with the very young child. Vehicular toys, nursery and kindergarten apparatus, playgrounds, and care of toys may all be used to instill the fundamentals of safety education.

"Call for First Aid" stresses the importance of a well-equipped first-aid room in every school and the assignment of responsibilities for rendering first aid.

THE EFFECT OF IMPROVED NUTRITION AND REGULAR REST IN TWO GROUPS OF CHILDREN. By Margery J. Lord, M. D. *The Medical Woman's Journal*, June 1939, 1-4.

Not a scientific experiment but a piece of practical work carried out in Asheville, North Carolina, proves that improved nutrition and regular rest are beneficial to the development of children. The children studied showed gain in weight and improvement in school attendance and scholarship. Dr. Lord states that "Nursery schools with trained workers should be considered a necessity in all of our cities." The regular programs of play, rest, and social contacts establish not only a valuable routine in themselves but make possible the best physical growth.

EARLY PROGRESS IN READING: NOT READING READINESS. By Frank T. Wilson and Ina C. Sartorius. *Teachers College Record*, May 1939, 40:685-694.

As the title suggests, the authors state that when the two-year-old is looking at picture books, repeating jingles and rhymes, and playing with alphabet blocks, he is reading at the earliest stage in the growth of reading ability. They describe in detail ways in which this beginning stage should be guided and present physiological and psychological reasons why such guidance is helpful. The advantages of functional reading thus started at an early age and carried on in the primary grades are undisputedly offered. Nursery school teachers and kindergartners will be helped by reading this article as well as primary teachers and administrators.

Research...

Editor, JOHN A. HOCKETT

ABSTRACTS

THE ACTIVITY OF YOUNG CHILDREN DURING SLEEP. By Chester Roy Garvey. Minneapolis: The University of Minnesota Press, Institute of Child Welfare, Monograph No. 18, 1939. Pp. x + 102.

The purposes of this study were to establish norms regarding the activity of children during normal sleep and the duration of rest periods between movement in order that the effects of various factors on children's sleep might be determined and in order that the sleep of children might be compared with that of adults. The subjects of the experiment were eight girls and fourteen boys, ranging in age from 25 months to 58 months, all of whom were pupils in the nursery school of the Institute of Child Welfare, University of Minnesota. Records were gathered for at least a year on ten children and for at least five months on three others. Most of the conclusions are drawn from the data on these 13 children.

All of the children slept in their own homes in identical Simmons cribs, on the under side of each of which was attached a Johnson kinetograph which recorded the child's motions during the night. Each mother turned an electrical switch which started the recording mechanism when the child went to bed and turned it off when he arose in the morning. She prepared a daily report from the record of the instrument, including other information regarding temperature, ventilation, the child's state of health, and activities between supper and bedtime. Usable records were secured for a total of 3300 nights. In the analysis of the data, the night was divided into three periods, as follows: the initial active period from the time the child was put to bed until he had apparently gone to sleep, the rest period, and the final active period after he awoke in the morning. The night was also divided into five-minute intervals and analyses

made of the number of such intervals during which one or more movements were recorded. The initial and final active periods were characterized by one or more movements during each five-minute interval. The percentage of five-minute intervals during which movement is recorded varies from about 32 to 46 during the first three hours and is just under 50 for the remainder of the night.

Much more similarity was found between the patterns of nocturnal activity for these children than Johnson found in his study of adults. Activity during sleep tends to be periodic or rhythmic in the case of these subjects as of those studied in other investigations. Sex differences were found to be slight, the boys going to sleep more quickly than the girls and sleeping somewhat more quietly. The average period of rest during sleep was found to be about 8 minutes, ranging from 6.4 to 9.4 minutes. This indicates that young children tend to move almost twice as frequently as adults. They were also found to require considerably more time than adults to go to sleep.

Length of sleep and time of going to bed seem to have no influence on quietness of sleep. Sleep was somewhat less quiet if the child had had an afternoon nap. Temperatures, unless extreme, seemed to have no effect on the restfulness of sleep. There was a tendency to sleep longer in cold than in warm weather and fever temperatures tended to produce somewhat less quiet sleep than usual. The three-year-olds required more time to go to sleep and showed more activity during sleep than did those at two or four years of age. Sleep was somewhat more quiet when the children had engaged in violent exercise before bedtime, when they went to sleep lying on the abdomen or back, and when they had had violet ray treatments during the day.

HERE AND THERE

• An Invitation

Groups of teachers who wish to meet at regular intervals for study and discussion of professional problems are invited to consider affiliation with the Association for Childhood Education. Those interested may secure from A.C.E. Headquarters in Washington copies of the A.C.E. Branch Manual, with information about organization and maintenance of Branches; the May issue of the *A.C.E. Branch Exchange*, giving special help on program planning; and the 1939 *Yearbook* with reports of officers and committee chairmen, a list of local Branches and state Associations, and other information about the organization and its work.

• A.C.E. Yearbook

The 1939 *Yearbook* has been mailed to contributing and life members of the Association and to presidents, secretaries, and publications representatives of A.C.E. Branches. Have you received yours? If not, please send us your current mailing address so that our records may be corrected and your copy of the 1939 *Yearbook* forwarded.

• Changes

Ruth G. Strickland from Kansas State Teachers College, Emporia, to Indiana University, Bloomington.

Della M. Perrin from Public Schools, Sioux City, Iowa, to Graduate School of Education, Yale University, New Haven, Connecticut.

Mary Allen Tippet from Parker School District, Greenville, South Carolina, to Public Schools, Bronxville, New York.

Marian Carswell from Hubbard Woods School, Winnetka, Illinois, to Smith College, Northampton, Massachusetts.

• Retirements

Grace Mix, State Teachers College, Farmville, Virginia, to live in New York City.

Charlotte Hunter, Public Schools, Hibbing, Minnesota, to live in Monmouth, Illinois.

• A.C.E. Books Appreciated

In April of this year the A.C.E. Literature Committee, Mary L. Morse, chairman, completed the fourth and last of the Umbrella books of stories and poems for children, *Told Under*

the Magic Umbrella. The continued appeal of the three earlier volumes and the immediate acceptance of the newest member of the Umbrella series make the achievement of the Literature Committee one of which they may justly be proud.

The publisher, The Macmillan Company, reports sales for the fiscal year ending April 30, as follows:

<i>Told Under the Green Umbrella</i> (1930).....	2655
<i>Told Under the Blue Umbrella</i> (1933).....	4190
<i>Sung Under the Silver Umbrella</i> (1935).....	3526
<i>Told Under the Magic Umbrella</i> (April 1939).....	1155

• Leaflet for Parents

As the season approaches when both parents and teachers are considering what toys to give to children, attention is called to the six-page leaflet issued last year by the A.C.E. Committee on Equipment and Supplies — *Toys...What...When*. This leaflet was planned for distribution at parent-teacher meetings and educational toy exhibits. A pre-Christmas discussion meeting for parents and an exhibit of educational toys could well be based upon the material in this leaflet.

Toys...What...When may be secured from the Association for Childhood Education, 1201 Sixteenth St., N.W., Washington, D. C., in quantities of 25 or more at 10c each; single copies, 15c.

If you are planning an exhibit, A.C.E. Headquarters in Washington will send on request a copy of the program of a toy forum held in Baltimore, Maryland, last year. Supply limited.

• An Early Christmas Suggestion

The December 1938 issue of *CHILDHOOD EDUCATION* gave excellent suggestions for the celebration of the Christmas festival. The many orders received for single copies, necessitating a reprinting, gave evidence that this number was especially helpful.

Readers who were not subscribers last year may secure single copies, as long as the supply lasts, from A.C.E. Headquarters, 1201 Sixteenth St., N.W., Washington, D. C., at 30c each; in quantities of 25 or more, 25c.

• Conventions

American Association of University Women: At the meeting held in Denver, Colorado, June 19-23, Irene Taylor Heineman, assistant superintendent of instruction, California, presided over the general session on education. C. S. Boucher, chancellor of the University of Nebraska, spoke on "The Adjustment of Education to Reality." William G. Carr, secretary to the Educational Policies Commission of the National Education Association, talked of "Suggested Policies for American Education." Two points emphasized by Dr. Carr that should be given special consideration by readers of CHILDHOOD EDUCATION are:

Make education effectively free. Bar no one from educational opportunity because of where he happens to live or because his parents are poor. The American ideal of equal educational opportunity already enters to some degree into the financing of education in most of the states. It should enter also into the financing of public schools by the Federal Government. The same ideal penetrates our plans for providing educational opportunities suited to individual differences. It guides the choice of teaching methods and materials. It calls for the prompt repudiation in practice, as well as in theory, of the concept of "mass education." Each American child, regardless of wealth or social status, should have an opportunity for a complete educational experience that is adapted to his special needs. What more can a democracy offer its future citizens? And what less? Yet millions of children of school age at this moment lack decent educational facilities.

Important changes in prevailing methods of school finance will be necessary to bring these ideals to fruition. These changes involve the reorganization of local finance units, more equitable sharing in the tax burden in terms of ability to pay, substantial federal and state participation in school finance, and probably other equally far-reaching measures.

Let educational agencies conduct the work of education. Education is a specialized, professional service. It can not be managed properly by agencies set up to administer health, welfare, or any other non-educational service. The total program of public education, including library service and public recreation, should be vested in the public educational system.

Let the day be hastened when public education will offer cultural, vocational, and leisure-time learning activities for persons of all ages who may wish to participate. This will involve extension of the common school program both above and below its present limits to include kindergartens and nursery schools for young children and a broad program adapted to the needs and interests of older youth and adults. It will involve close coordination of school, library, and recreation services under qualified and responsible leadership. It will require careful planning of the location and construction of educational facilities. The buildings will be adapted to the varied educational needs of the whole population. They will be situated in administrative units large enough to provide adequate tax support.

Following the addresses a panel of twelve, representing many different fields of education, discussed the suggestions made by the two speakers.

Margaret Morriss, president, continues in office for another two years.

National Education Association: During the meeting in San Francisco, California, July 2-6, the topic discussed at the first session of the Kindergarten-Primary Department was "What Kindergarten and Primary Teachers Can Do to Prevent Failure in the Middle Grades." The large audience of teachers and administrators testified to the general interest in this topic. Those who were unable to attend this session may read in the annual report of the National Education Association abstracts of the talks made by Robert Hill Lane, Marcia Bonsall, Worcester Warren, Katherine Page Porter, and Agnes Samuelson.

The luncheon meeting of this department on July 5, at the Hotel Mark Hopkins, was delightful and helpful. Kindergarten and primary teachers in the Bay Section had spared no effort to make it truly lovely. Mildred B. Moss, director of education, Metuchen, New Jersey, and Helen M. Reynolds, supervisor of kindergarten-primary grades, Seattle, Washington, brought messages of practical value to all those attending. At the business session officers of the department for 1940 were elected as follows:

President, Ethelyn L. Mitchell, Chicago, Illinois

Vice-president, Ruth O. Ferguson, Mount Vernon, New York

Secretary-Treasurer, Jessie D. Reilly, Chicago, Illinois.

Delta Kappa Gamma: Three hundred members of Delta Kappa Gamma, women who are leaders in education in thirty-six states, met August 30-31 in Asheville, North Carolina, to report on progress made in carrying forward the purposes of the organization, and to make plans for the future. One session was given to the discussion of "Improving Educational Status Through Cooperative Effort." Representatives of other educational groups suggested ways in which such cooperation could accomplish much for children and teachers. The closing event was a banquet sponsored by the Tennessee state organization. Maycie K. Southall, Nashville, Tennessee, is president of Delta Kappa Gamma.

Note: The Association for Childhood Education was represented by its Executive Secretary at the conventions of these three organizations.

American Home Economics Association:

About 1700 persons registered for the meeting in San Antonio, Texas, June 19-23. At the first general session Joseph K. Folsom of Vassar College addressed members and the general public on "Home-Management and Self-Management." The topic of the second general session was "Newer Devices Available to Home Economists." Special sessions included discussions of nutrition; industrial research in food and nutrition; the adjustment of public school home economics courses to the needs of pupils and their families; the improvement of living conditions among rural families; the mental hygiene of family life; housing, and institution administration.

The president, Helen Judy Bond, Teachers College, Columbia University, holds office for another year. Gladys Branegan, Montana State College, succeeds Dr. Bond in 1940.

World Federation of Education Associations:

Sarah A. Marble, official delegate of the Association for Childhood Education, sends an enthusiastic informal report of the meetings held by the Kindergarten-Preschool Section of the W. F. E. A. on the *S.S. Rotterdam* en route to Rio de Janeiro, and in Puerto Rico.

A preliminary or program-planning meeting was held by each section on board the *Rotterdam* before reaching Buenos Aires. Elizabeth Macadam, of Wilmington, Delaware, presided for the preschool group. At this meeting reports of preschool work being done in eight countries were presented and the interest shown led to suggestions that mimeographed copies be made available. (Watch CHILDHOOD EDUCATION for announcement.)

The first regular meeting of the Kindergarten-Preschool Section was a joint conference with the health section of the Federation held after leaving Rio de Janeiro, with Sally Lucas Jean presiding. Edna Gerken, supervisor of education in the Bureau of Indian Affairs, spoke on the fundamentals of health education, stating:

That selection should be made on the basis of actual needs of the children being taught.

That real practice of health habits should be the major method of teaching.

That information should be hopeful, not based on fear.

That real health and not just socially accepted standards should be emphasized.

She illustrated these principles from the teaching done among the Navajos and it was most vivid and sympathetic. Frank Midkiff from the Hawaiian Islands gave a clear picture of the

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necessity for a realistic and not too ambitious health program in that locality. Starting with a drive for clean teeth they found that preventing decay was not a matter of cleanliness but of nutrition. They began an investigation of the diets in the homes of the different races and made an attempt to improve them without upsetting racial traditions. May Day, which is Lei Day in Hawaii, has been taken as Child Health Day and charmingly dramatized. Jeannette Harter, Valley City, North Dakota, described the health services offered in her city as typical of the United States, although cooperation there with the first health examination seemed better than in some places. Emphasis was placed upon the opportunity of the kindergarten class to practice health habits, because of its equipment, flexible program, and freedom from tradition and formal subject matter.

Puerto Rico was hostess to the next meeting of the Section. Features were: a panel discussion led by Jeannette Harter and a description of preschool education in Puerto Rico by Josefita Monserrate. The meeting was held at the University. Fifteen children returned to school for the morning so that visitors might see them at work. A delightful luncheon served at the University was followed by excursions to points of interest. Forty local A. C. E. members were among the hostesses and participants.

On shore visits members of the conference cruise were cordially received. In Buenos Aires, Rio de Janeiro, and Puerto Rico hospitality was eager and charming and many opportunities were offered for visiting schools and other interesting places and for contacts with those working with young children.

• American Education Week

Again the National Education Association, in cooperation with the American Legion, the U. S. Office of Education, and the National Congress of Parents and Teachers, and with the support of many other organizations, seeks to interpret the nation's schools to the public. The dates selected for American Education Week are November 6-11. Daily topics under the theme, "Education for the American Way of Life", deal with the place of religion in our democracy; education for self-realization; education for human relationships; education for economic efficiency; education for civic responsibility; cultivating the love of learning, and education for freedom. Through emphasis on these topics it is hoped to increase appreciation for schools.

Packets for kindergarten-primary, elementary school, junior high school, high school, and rural school, and a special teachers college packet stressing the one hundredth anniversary of teacher education in the United States, have been prepared to help in the observance of American Education Week. Secure from the National Education Association, 1201 Sixteenth St., N.W., Washington, D. C. Price 50c each.

The materials in the kindergarten-primary packets have been prepared by five committees with the following people as chairmen:

Anne O'Neill, Oregon College of Education, Monmouth, Oregon
 Maycie K. Southall, Peabody College for Teachers, Nashville, Tennessee
 Jennie Campbell, State Department of Education, Salt Lake City, Utah
 Elma A. Neal, Public Schools, San Antonio, Texas
 Irene Hirsch, State Teachers College, Buffalo, New York

• *Children's Book Week*

November 12-18 marks the twenty-first anniversary of Children's Book Week. The slogan, "Books Around the World", has an especial appeal to those parents and teachers who feel this year an increased responsibility for encouraging international understanding and friendship through books and reading.

Information about plans for celebrating Children's Book Week and help in outlining your own observance of this national educational program may be secured from committee headquarters at 62 W. 45th Street, New York City.

• *Fellowship Fund Award*

Pi Lambda Theta announces three awards of \$250 each, from the Ella Victoria Dobbs Fellowship Fund, to be granted on or before May 15, 1940, to the woman of graduate standing or to the member or group of members of Pi Lambda Theta presenting the most significant research studies in education. Any subject in keeping with the national study program of Pi Lambda Theta will be acceptable. For details write to the Fellowship Committee, Marion Anderson, chairman, 15 Ashburton Place, Boston, Mass.

• *Commission on Teacher Education*

Thirty-four colleges and school systems, scattered throughout the country, have been invited by the Commission on Teacher Education of the American Council on Education to join with it in a cooperative study of the prepara-

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These bulletins were mailed in 1939 to A.C.E. contributing and life members, presidents, secretaries and publications representatives of A.C.E. Branches. Available to others at regular price.

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tion of teachers and of their continuing education while in service. This number includes seven teachers colleges, five liberal arts colleges, six universities, two Negro institutions, ten independent school systems, and four groupings of school systems.

Karl W. Bigelow, director, states that the Commission will provide the groups with consultant and other services and with opportunities to send representatives to six-weeks summer workshops where problems of teacher education can be intensively studied and plans for their solution developed. Opportunities will also be provided for staff members to collaborate in the study of child development and teacher personnel at a center to be established by the Commission next fall at the University of Chicago.

• In Ecuador

Regarding preschool education, the Law of April 8, 1938, of Ecuador states that:

Preschool education shall be provided for children three to six years of age.

Kindergartens shall be centers of observation and study concerned with the harmonious development of the children's personality and their adjustment to social environment.

Staffs must be specially trained.

Refresher courses for kindergarten mistresses and inspectors shall be held annually and diplomas gained from these courses shall be considered in making staff appointments.

Four points are given as the aims of elementary education:

Acquainting the child with his natural surroundings and social environment by training him to observe and interpret natural and social facts.

Teaching and guiding him so as to develop his moral sense and economic usefulness.

Ascertaining his special aptitudes and developing his sense of responsibility and solidarity.

Developing and stimulating his national sentiments and love of country.

• N.A.N.E. Conference

The National Association for Nursery Education will hold its eighth biennial conference at the Hotel Pennsylvania, New York City, October 25-28. Convention theme, "Nursery Education—Today and Tomorrow." Programs may be obtained from Emma Johnson, Temple University, Philadelphia.

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